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The praise of Folie.

MORIÆ ENCOMIVM

a booke made in latyne by that great clerke Erasmus Roterodame.

Englished by sir Thomas Chaloner knight.

ANNO. M. D.
XLIX.

George Barons—

153.399
May 1873

To the reader.

FOLIE IT MAIE BE thought in me to haue spent tyme in englishynge of this boke, entitled the praise of Folie, whereas the name it selfe semeth to set forth no wisedome, or matter of grauitee vnlesse perhappes Erasmus, the autour therof, delited to mocke men, in callyng it one thyng, and meanyng an other. To this I answere, that Folie in all poinctes is not (as I take it) so straung vnto vs, but that hir name maie wel be abiden, a long as will we or nill we, she will be sure to beare a stroke in mosse of our doyngs: how so euer a certaine sette of faulte finders condemne all things, that fully square not with their owne rules, yea twise blinde in this, that among the commen errours and infyrmitees of mortall men, they will beare nothing with their bretherne, as who saieth, they were demigoddes, and not more than one or two waies lynked in Folies bandes. I haue therfore bestowed an englishe liuerey vpon this latine boke, as well as I coulde: not so much to please all men, as rather to shew how euin this Folie toucheth all men. Wherin I woulde not be noted as a carper of any man particulerly (for what more vnsittyng than in bokes or plaies to touch men by name?) nor that here in I seke to haue any kynd of men noted for theyr trade of lyfe, otherwyse than the abuse thereof deserueth, but

 onely

onely my meaning is suche, as Erasmus in this booke shall expresse for vs bothe. Ye of his modestee is content to set no great face vpon it, nor woulde be noted to haue spent great labour in makynge thereof: saynge as in pastime to haue assayed, whether ought might be spoken in prayse of Folie, whereas wyselsome the vertue can praise it selfe. And therfore he imagineth, that Folie shoulde bee a goddesse: who before all kyndes of men assembled as to a sermon shoulde declare how many benefites they receyue at hir handes, and how without hir accesse, nothyng in this life is delectable, commodious, or tollerable vnto vs, no not our owne life. This braue boste might well come from Folie: and seynge that wyser men are wont to take in worth what is saied by a foole, therfore is Erasmus also the bolder to put that tale in Folies mouth, which vnder an other person he would haue made more curteste to haue spoken. So what excuse he maketh, the same I requyre maie serue for me: that thinges spoken foolishly, by Folie, maie be euin so taken, and not wrested to any bitter sence or ernest application. For surely if the crabbedst men that be, are wont to take a fooles woordes as in sporte, for feare lest others myght reckon they would not wynche without a galled backe: Than how muche more is a domme booke written generally to be borne withall? namely where the title pretendeth no grauytee, but rather a tope to stere laughter, without offence in the booke if the reader bringe none offence with him. For than truely he maie chaunce to see his owne image more liuely described than in any peincted table.

But if that waies he mislike the deformite of his counterfaite,

terfaite, let him muche more mislyke to bee suche one in deede. And seeyng the vices of our daies are suche as can not enough be spoken agaynste, what knowe we, if Erasmus in this booke thought good betweene game and ernest to rebuke the same? And chiefely to perswade (if it might be) a certaine contentation in euery man, to holde him agreede with suche lotte and state of liuinge, as ariseth to him: For whiche purpose was I also sooneste moued to englishe it, to the end that meane men of baser wittes and condicion, might haue a maner coumfort and satisfaction in theim selfes. In as muche as the heigh god, who made vs all of one earth, hath natheleste chosen some to rule, and more to serue. Wherat so muche lacketh that the inferiours shoulde repine, as rather set in the meaner degree, they shoulde thanke god the more: without aspiring to thinges aboue theyr reache, which shoulde drawe more trouble and perilles, than if they abstreigned therfro, and gaue place to others, who had greatter giftes of God, and were called by auctoritee of theyr prince or countrey to welde the same. For surely, yf a man of the poorer sorte, whose eyes is dased in beholdyng the fayre glosse of wealth and felicitee, whiche the state of a great lorde or counsailour in a commen wealth dooeth outewardly represent, and inwardly marke the trauayles, cares, and anxietees, whiche suche one is driuen to susteigne (doyng as he ought to dooe) in seruyng his maister and countrey, wherby he is nothinge lesse than hys owne man: now I beleue he would not muche enuy his state, nor chose to chaunge condicions of lyfe with hym. But this were euen the chiefest poynete of wysedome.

though fooles (as Folie calleth theim) that is to saie vulgare folke, are those, that vnwittyng of their treasure, doee in deede enioie this sweete quietnesse, and greatest good tourne. And waiyng this foolishe boke after this sense, I wene a profite also maie arise thereby:ough to the readers, besides the delectacion, beyng so pithilie pleasant as it is. For as Erasmus in all his wo:kes sauoureth of a liuely quicknesse, and spareth not sometyme in graue matters to sp:incle his style, where he maie snatche opo:tunitee with merrie conceited sentences: so in this booke, treatynge of suche a Theme, and vnder suche a person, he openeth all his bowget: So farfoo:th as by the iudgement of many learned men, he neuer shewed mo:e art, no:witte, in any the grauest booke he wo:te, than in this his prayse of Folie. Whiche the reader hauyng any consideraunce, shall soone espie, how in euery matter, yea almost euery clause, is hidden besides the mirth, some deaper sence and purpose. In deede I againe saie not, but he maketh Folie to speake at random, without sparyng of any estate of men: but yet indifferent eares will heare their faultes patientely, aslong as they maie chose, whether they will take the faulte vpon theim o:not: o:bee a knowne to be those, whom Folie noteth. But euin this frankneſſe of Folies tauntyng I haue p:esumed in some pointes to ytche to the b:ke: namely in two o:three places, whiche the learned reader comparyng with the latine boke, maie easily perceiue, how either I haue slipped ouer a line o:two, o:eased the sow:e sence of the latine with some mannerlier englishe wo:de, Wherein I chose rather to be counted a suante true interp:etour,

four, than otherwyse to touche thynges, whiche were better vnsayed, allong as it hurted not the grace of the boke though they were omitted. Likewyse in all my translacion I haue not peined my selfe to render worde for worde, nor prouerbe for prouerbe, wherof many be greke, such as haue no grace in our toung, but rather markyng the sence. I applied it to the phrase of our englishe. And where the prouerbes would take no englishe prouerbes of like waight in their places, whiche mate be thought by some cunnyng translatours a deadly sinne. Yet I sticke not for all that, in this foolishe booke to vse mine owne foolishe saffe. And if it be misliked. I passe not greatly though I lose the praise of my folie.

Folie speaketh.

How so euer men commonly talke of me (as perdie I am not ignorant what lewde reportes go on FOLIE, yea euen amongst those that are veriest fooles of all) yet that I am she, I onely (I saie) who through myne influence do gladde both the goddes and men, by this it maie appere sufficiently: that was soone as I came forth to saie my mynd afore this your so notable assemblie, by and by all your lokes began to clere vp: vnbendyng the frounyng of your browes, & laughyng vpon me with so merie a countenaunce, as by my trouthe me seemeth euin, that all ye (whom I see here presente) doe fare as if ye were well whitled, and thoroughly moysted with the Nectar wine of the Homericall goddes, not without a portion of the iuyce of that meruailous herbe Nepenthes, whiche hath force to put sadnesse and melancholie from the herte: where as before ye satte all heaute, and glommyng, as if ye had come lately from Troponius caue, or sainct pattrickes purgatorie. But lyke as whan Phebus displaieth his golden bright rates vppon the earth, or whan after a sharpe stormie winter, the new prymetyde flourisheth with his caulme sweete westerne wynde, than (loe) a new likenesse, a new hewe, and a newe youthe (as it were) returneth vnto all thynges: Euen so, as soone

I fooles presence sterreth laughter.

as I apeared, ye all beganne to loke vp luskisly. So, what thynge theis cunnyng Rhetoriciens for all theyr longe, and forepenned orations can hardly bring about I meane to driue care, and pensiuenesse out of the hearers myndes) that haue I with my onely loke, and presence accomplished. And now ye shall wite, to what entent at this tyme, in this so straunge an apparell, I am come foorthe among? you: vpon condition ye will not thinke muche to bestowe on me your eares a while. I meane not those eares that ye carie with you to sermons, but those ye geue to players, to iesters, and to fooles. Yea those (hardly) wherwith my friende Midas whilom herkened to the rurall god Pan, in preferryng his rusticall songe, before Apollos farre finer Melodie. For I purpose a season to become a Sophiste, mistake me not I praie you, as if I saide Sophister, suche as now a dales driue into children heads, certayne tangled trifles, with more than womens stubbournesse and scoldyng in their disputations. But I meane the other, who to the end they might shonne that presumptuous name of Sophi or wisemen, did rather take vpon them to be called Sophistes, whose studye and profession it was, to aduaunce, and set foorth in their writyng? the praises bothe of the Godd?, and of men also, suche as were famous and worthies here in earth. Ye shall here therefore the praise set foorth, not of Hercules, nor yet of Solon, but rather of mine owne selfe, That is to saie of Folie. In whiche poinct, a strawe for all these rankerd philosophers, and sages, who saie it is a mosse outragious folie and presumption, for one to praise him selfe. For truly let them make it as foo-

To trifuls better care geuen then to grauer matters.

lisshe

lisshe a parte as they lyste, so longe as they can not denie it to be congruent. And what (I praie you) maie be more apt or better sittyng, than dame Foly to praise hir selfe, and be hir owne trumpet? For who can liuelier descriue me, then I my selfe? Unles perhaps some be better acquainted with me, then I my selfe am. Not withstandynge, euen this my selfeprayse (as me seemeth) I maie well take vpō me with a more shamefast grace, than to do as commenly theis great, and learned men vse, who suborne some glosyng oratour, or vaine spoken poete, hyred also for mede, to dilate and blaste foorth theyr praises, or (rightlier to say) peincted lies. And yet shall one of those shamefast, maidenly men not sticke than to displaie his pecockes fethers, and rowse him selfe, whylys suche shameles flatters dooe goe about to make him, being a man lesse worth thā naught coequall yet vnto the Gods, in blasonnyng him for a paragonne, and absolute examble of al maner vertues, from which he knoweth him selfe to be as farre wyde, as from hence to the man in the moone. Namely whiles those glorious glosers woulde decke the crow with other burds fethers, or peyne theim to wasshe away a Morions blacknesse, or labour of a sely fly to make an Elephante. For shorte, I folowe in this poincte the common prouerbe, whiche saieth, that he maie rightly praise him selfe, whom none other bodie will. All bee it to saie the trueth, I can not but meruaile at mens ingratitude (shuld I call it) or negligence? that where with one assent they all so frankely dooe obserue me, and gladly peruse my commoditees, yet hath not one of theim, now so many reuolucions of yeres passed, vnder

Oratours & poetes.

taken with some thankefull oracion to set forthe the praises of me Folie, where as some of theym haue not wanted, who with solemne styles, and muche losse of slepe and candell, shewed at least their folie, what euer their mattier was, in commendacion, some of this notable tyranne, some of that, some in praise of the feuer quartayne, others in settyng forth what commodities bee in a flie, in baldnesse, or suche lyke hatefull thyngs. But at my hand, ye shall heare an vnadvised, and sodeyne tale tolde, thoughe so muche perhaps the truer, whiche I woulde not ye shoulde thynke were saide of me for a colour, to aduaunce therby the ryppenesse of my wytte, as commonly these lerned men do. Who puttynge forth (as ye knowe) some boke more than whole .rrr. wynters had in cullyng, ye and that sometymes none of their owne doyng, will sweare yet, that they made it but for a recreacion of their grauer studies, or rather as fast as penne coulde renne. For truly it hath euer best lyked me to speake streight what so euer late on my tounges ende. But this, to the ende ye loke not for it, I doe warne ye of afore hande, that I in no wise will, accordynge to these common Sophisters and Rhetoricians maner, go about to shew by diffinicion what I am, and muche lesse vse any diuision: In as muche as I holde bothe the one and the other for vnluckie tokens, eyther to comprehende hir, vnder a certayne ende, or limits, whose influence stretcheth so vniuersally, or els to diuide hir, in whose obseruaunce all men doe so wholy consent. And yet I can not tell to what purpose it shulde serue, to represent a certaine shadowe, or image of my selfe, where as presently ye

The vaine glorie of lerned mē.

maie discerne me with your eies. For I am here (as ye see) the distributrix and dealer of all felicitee, named Μωρία in Greeke, in Latine Stultitia, in Englishe Folie. But aye, what neded me to vtter thus muche? As if I bare not signes enough in my face, and countinaunce, what maner person I am: Or as if some one contendyng that I were Minerua, or Sophia, myght not straight with my onely loke be confuted, though I helde my talke, whiche is no liyng myrronr of the mindes disposicion. For in me (ye must thynke) is no place for settyng of colours as I can not saie one thynge, and thynke an other: but on all sydes I doe resemble myselfe. So that not so muche as they can dissemble me, who take vpon theim most semblante of wisdome, and walke lyke Asses in Lyons skynnes. That althoughe they counterfeite what they can, yet on some syde their longe eares pearyng foorth, doe discouer them to come of Midas progenie. The vnkyndest kynde of men liuyng, who beyng in deede the verie standerdbearers of my bande, woulde seeme yet afore folke to be so ashamed of my name, as not seldome they cast it in others teeth for a great reproche. Suche men therfore, that in deede are archdoltes, and woulde be taken yet for sages and philosophers, maie I not aptely calle theim foolelosophers? For as in this behalfe I haue thought good to borowe a littell of the Rhetoriciens of these dates, who plainely thinke them selues demygods, if lyke horsleches they can shew two tounges, I meane to mingle their writings with words sought out of strāge langages, as if it were alonely thyng for thiem to poudre theyr bokes with ynkehorne termes, although per-

Foly dissembled.

Obscurite and affectacion of wryters.

 chaunce

chaunce as vnaptly applyed, as a gold ringe in a sowes nose. That and if they want suche sarre fetched vocables, than searche they out of some rotten Pamphlet foure or fyue disused woordz of antiquitee, therewith to darken the sence vnto the reader, to the ende, that who so vnderstaydeth theim, maie repute him selfe for more cunnynge, and littarate: and who so dooeth not, shall so much the rather yet esteeme it to be some high mattier, because it passeth his learnyug. For this is truely not the least of my pleasant propertees, to make men euer set most store by straunge and outlandysshe thyngz, So that some be of suche vaineglorious nesse as whan they can least skyll therof, yet will they flire, and nodde the head at it, and (as the Asse doth) wagge their earss, to make others beleue that they are depely seene therin. And this, is thus. But now I retourne to my matter. Ye haue hreade my name than (O my friendz) what addicion shall I geue you? What? but my most foolyshe friendz. For by what more manerly surname maie the goddesse Folie calle hir seruauntes, and alies? But now seing all folkes know not of what lynage I am descended, so helpe me the Muses as I entende to declare the same vnto you. My father therfore was neyther Chaos, nor Orcus, nor Saturnus, nor any other of that olde and rustie race of Gods, but Plutus the golden god of riches, *and the onely sire of gods and men*, though Hesiodus, Homere, ye and Iupiter him selfe stande neuer so stifly agaynst me. At whose onely becke as aforetymes, so now also both holy, and vnholy thyngz be tourned topset. tiruie. At whose arbitrement warre, peace, kyngdomes, counsailes, iudgementz,

Folies father.

ment, assemblees, marriages, couenaunt, leagues, lawes, sciences, games, earnest matters (my breath faileth me) to be short, all publike, and priuate doyngs of men are administred. Without whose ayde, the whole route of the poeticall Godds, yea I will say further, those that be the chosen Godd shuld either not bee at all, or liue els with a messe of skilender chere. That whom so he is egreued with, Pallas is not able to protecte him. And who so hath him on his syde, maie (if it lyke him) defie Iupiter with all his thunder. The force of money.

And suche a father (loe) dooe I glorie in. Who neyther begatte me of his braine, as Iupiter did that vnamiable, scrowlyng Goddesse Pallas, but of Youthe, a Nymph aboue all others most fayre, and goodly. Neither was he (I warrant you) at the tyme of my begetting clogged with the beaute yoke of wedlocke, wherin Vulcane that lymphalt smithe was borne, but rather mired in loue (as my Nomere saieth) whiche I take to be a copulation not a littell more pleasant than the other is. Further, to the ende that ye mistake nothyng, I dooe ye to wite that Plutus begatte me not in his olde daies, whan he was blynde, and skarce able to goe for age, and goutinesse, as the poete Aristophanus describeth him: but in his pryme yeres, whan as yet he was sounde, and full of hotte bloudde, but muche fuller of Nectar drinke, whiche sittyng at bourde with the other Godd, he hath sipped than by chaunce somewhat more than enough. Nowe and if ye loke to be instructed also of my byrth place, in so muche as now a daies men thynke how the countrey where one is borne doth not a littell importe towardes his nobilitee, ye shall vnderstand Folies mother.

derstande that I was brought forth neither in flotinge Delos, as Apollo, nor amongs the vvauing seas, where Venus toke hir beginnyng, nor yet in holovv rockes vnder ground, as was the great god Iupiter, but euen amidd? the Iland?, whiche of their singuler fertilitee and fruitefulnesse, are called Fortunatæ, where as all thyngs growe vnsowed and vntilled. In whiche Iles neither labour, nor age, nor any maner sickneſſe reigneth, nor in the feelds there dooe either Nettels, Thistles, Mallowes, Brambles, Cockle, or such like bagage grow, but in stede therof Gylofloures, Roses, Lilies, Basile, Violets, and such swete smellyng herbes, as whilom grew in Adonis gardeins, doe on all sides satisfie bothe the sente, and the sighte. Thus borne in these delites, I beganne not my lyfe with teares, but straight waies smyled sweetely on my mother, an euident argument and token of good lucke as these byrthlotters saie. Further as concernyng my bringynge vp, I am not enuious that Iupiter the great god had a gote to his foſtreſſe, seyng two so pleasante Nymphes, as Dronkennes daughter vnto Bacchus, & Rudenes the daughter of Pan were my nourses. Whom ye maie se here also among? my other women and handmaides about me. Whose names in case ye lisse to know, I am very well content to reherse theim vnto you. For this maydē truely, whom ye maie beholde with browes vpcaste, lokynge euer as if she wondred at somethyng, is called Selfeloue. This ner [hir] that fareth as if she flired vpon you, and clappeth hir hand? together, is Adulacion. This slouggerd, and drowsie head, is named Oblivion. This than that leaneth on hir elbowes, clas-

Folies byrth place

Hereby is ment that those which ar born to moste welthe prone many times most foles

Folies nourses,

Folies hād maids

pyng hir handes togethers, is called Lithernes. This besydes hir with the Rose garlande on hir head, and all to perfumed with sweete sauours, is cleped Voluptuousnes. This with the rollyng and vnstedfaste eies is Madnes. This other with the slicke skinne, and fayre fedde bodie, is called Delicacie. As for these two Goddes, whiche ye maie see also in the felowship of my other traine, the one is named Belichere, the other Soundsleepe. Now if ye aske me, what stede these stande me to? I aunsweare, that throughe the trustie ayde of suche a bande as this is, I subdue all the worlde vnder my dominion, bearyng empire ouer emperours them selues. Ye haue heard me thus declare vnto you my lynage, my education, and my kamplie. but leaste now I myght causelesse seme to challenge the name of a Goddesse, herken ye therfore attentiuely, with how great commodities I endue bothe godde and men, and how largely my power stretcheth. For and if a certaine autour wrote not much amisse, *how this was properly the office of a god to do benifite to mortall men*: further, if suche haue worthily ben ascribed to the senate of the gods, as were fyrst inuentours of wyne, of corne, and suche lyke commodities for your liuyng: why should not I than rightfully be taken, and set to fore them all, who onely am the geuer of all thinges, to all men? For first (I are) what maie be sweter or more dearer vnto you, than is your life? but the originall spryngе, and plantation of the same, whom shoulde ye thanke for, but me onely? In as muche as neither the speare of Pallas, ne yet the shield of Iupiter called Aegis, is it, that engendreth mankynde; but the selfe Iupiter, *father of the*

Folies' diuina operation.

Godde, and kinge of kynge, who with his onely becke, can ſhake all heauen, muſt laie downe his threforked thunder, & alſo his grimme countinaunce, wherwith whan hym liſteth he can make all the Godde to tremble, yea and lyke a plaier muſt diſguiſe him ſelfe into an other perſonage, in caſe he woulde doo the thyng, that almoſte he alwaies practiſeth (whiche is) to gette children. Againe, amonges mortall men, the Stoikes, count them ſelues to be nert the Gods in perfection. But bringe me one, admitte he be foure, or fiue, or (if you liſt) ſix hundred tymes a Stoike, and yet muſt he laie downe, if not his longe berde, betokenyng wiſedome, whiche natheles gotes haue alſo, at leaſt (I ſaie) laie aſyde his graue, and frounyng loke, he muſt caulme, and explane his forehead, he muſt caſte awaie thoſe his pronlyke leſſons, and precepte of doctrine, it is I, it is I (beleue me) whom that wiſe and ſage Stoike, muſt haue recourſe vnto, in caſe he woulde be a father. And why ſhoulde I not common more familiarly with you, accordynge to my cuſtome? I pray you, is it the head? the face? the breaſt? the handes? or the eares? whiche partes of the body are named honeſt, that endendre gods and men? I trow no. Naie, it is euen that ſelfe membre, ſo fonde, ſo fooliſſhe, as maie not without laughter bee ſpoken of, whiche is the onely planter of mankynde. That, is the onely fountaine, whens all thynges receiue life, a great deale ſooner than from Pythagoras quaternion. As concernyng the vſe wherof, who is he (ſuppoſe ye) woulde take in his mouthe the ſnaffle of wedlocke, if (accordynge as theſe wiſemen are wonte to doo) he ſhoulde fyrſte caſte and reken with

Wiſdome and grauitee in children gettyng ſeruenot to purpoſe.

Mariage, to proceede of Folie.

him

him selfe the discommodities of that trade of life? Or what woman wolde yelde vnto a man, if she either knew, or thought vpon the perillous throwes of childbearyng, or trauayle of their bringyng vp? That and if ye owe your liues to wedlocke, and wedlocke ye owe to my damoisell Madnes, now ye maie soone gesse, what ye owe, and shoulde referre to me. Than who is she, that after one assaie, woulde eftsoones venter childebearyng, ne were it not through the encouragement of Obliuion. No not Venus hir selfe (what euer Lucretius writeth) will deny, but that hir might in engendrure remaigneth voyde, and of small effect, without thassistence of myne ayde. So that to conclude, I say how of this my dronken and ridiculous game, are procreate (omittyng vulgare folke) bothe graue philosophers, whom suche succede now, as ye call monks, and purpre princes, and holy priests, and thrise holy bishoppes, at ones, all the whole route of the *Poeticall gods*, so swarminge, as skarce all heauen is able to contein the, be it neuer so large of roume. But take it hardly for nothing that ye owe thus vnto me the verie fountaine, and springe of your lyfe, in case what euer other commodities ye haue therin, I dooe not proue theim also to procede of my goodnesse. For as touchyng this lyfe here, maie it woorthily be called a lyfe (I pray you) if ye take pleasure and delight awaie? dooe you nodde vpon me? well saide, I wyst there was none of you all so wyse, or rather so foolyshe, nay wyse sooner, as wolde be of any other opinion. Now be it, euen these sage Stoikes dooe not in deede, so greatly despise pleasure, as outwardly thei dissemble, and afore folke dooe

Folie grounde of the commodities of mans lyfe.

 haite

baſſe hir with a thouſand repꝛeues, to none other entent (I warrant you) ſaue that whan others are rated therfro, thei than mate moꝛe at libertee enioie hir. But I woloe they ſhuld tell me, what any part of this life there is, not heauie, not vnpleaſant, not vrkeſome, not vnſauourie, vnles ye put Pleaſure, that is to ſaie, the *Soules of folie*, vnto it? foꝛ pꝛouſe wherof as I could alleage the ſufficient auctoꝛitee of Sophocles, whoſe noble ſentence in my fauour, is neuer enough pꝛaiſed, where he ſaieth, that *In knowyng leaſt, the bliſſefulſt lyfe is ledde*. So am I content yet foꝛ your better inſtruction, to diſcloſe euery thyng moꝛe particularly vnto you.

Infancie, foolyſhe.

And fyꝛſte, who is he but will confeſſe Childhode, the fiꝛſt age of man, to be moſt gracious and acceptable vn to all folke? foꝛ els, what is it in yonuge babes that we dooe kyſſe ſo, we doe colle ſo, we do cheryſhe ſo, that a very enemie is moued to ſpare and ſuccour this age, vnleſſe it be the allurement of Folie? whiche, natures circumſpection, euen purpoſedly, hath adioigned to childꝛen, to the ende that with ſome reputacion of pleaſure, thei might ſupple the trauaile of theyꝛ bꝛingers vp, and pꝛouoke the beneuolence of ſuche as tende vnto theim. The next age than that ſucceedeth hereto,

Youth.

I meane Youthe, how acceptable (I pꝛaie you) is it to all folke? how is eche enclined to it? how willyngly dooeth euery wight ſet it foꝛwarde? how diligently dooe all men put to theyꝛ healpyng hand? And wherof (trow ye) pꝛoceedeth this grace of Youthe, but of meeuely? thꝛough whoſe benefite, a younge man knoweth leaſt, and therfoꝛe taketh leaſt thought. Take me foꝛ a lier, vnles as ſoone as he waxeth elder, beginnyng

thꝛough

through experiente and diciplines to fauour of Manhode, than incontinent the floure of his beautie decayeth, his myght fadethe, his grace wareth colde, his ſtrengthe diminiſheth, ſo that the farther, and farther he is retyred from me, the leſſe, and leſſe he liueth, vntil at laſte, *tedious olde age* dooe crepe vpon him, not onely vnbeſome to others, but hatefull alſo to him ſelfe: whiche Olde age (on my conſcience) no mortall man wold endure to bydeout, if I agayne takyng compaſſion of theyr ſo great labours and encombrances, did not ſomwhat releue the ſame. That like as theſe godds of the poetes, are wont with ſome tranſformacion or likeneſſe ſournyng, to ſuccour men readie to periſſhe, ſo I alſo (that in me lyeth) dooe renoke ſuche aged men as are at deathes doze, and next the pitte, backe againe vnto childhode: Wherupon, not cauſeles, folke call theim *twyſe children*. Now and if ſome wouldeaſke me how I dooe tranſforme theim ſo, I will not hyde ſo muche as that from you. For I bringe them to the fountaine of my mayden Obliuion, called Lethes, whiche ſpringeth in the Iles fortunate (for as for the other that renneth through the fieldes Eliſij, is but a ſmall branche of this former) to the ende that as ſoone as they there haue dronken longe forgetfulneſſe of things paſſed, they maie, by littell and little, waſhyng awaie all the troubles and carefulneſſes of the mynde, become childiſſhe agayne. But ſome perhaps will obiecte to me, and ſaie, that ſuche olde men dooe dote now, and are paſſe theyr witte. Yea, be as be maie, yet this is euen the plaine recourſe vnto childhode, For is the ſame ought els (ſuppoſe you) than dotage, or ignorance: is it ought

Return of olde age to Chyldhode.

els in chyldren that delyteth you, than their indiscretion? For who is he that would not eschew, and abhorre, no lesse then a monster, a child beyng endued with man lyke reason and capacitee? wherunto accordeth this common proverbe, *I hate the childe, whose witte ripeneth before the time*. Or who wold gladly suffeine to haunte, or kepe company with that olde man, who vnto his so longe practise, and experience in thyngs, had added also lyke quickneffe of the mynde, and lyke sharpeneffe of discourse? Conclude therfore, that olde age doteth thorough my benefite, and yet ye see how these my good dotards, shall in the meane while reste vacante and discharged of all suche cares and anxietees, wherewith wisemen of fresher spryte are wrongen continually, & in the meane while become cherysshers eche of other, by neyghbourly gossippyng togethers, and table plate, felyng no maner tediousneffe of this life, whiche scarce a liuelier age suffreth, yea and sometime learne againe to spell a, m, o, as the olde man of Plautus dooeth, most wretched, in case one pynch of sound witte remayned in them, and yet thorough my procurement, moste happy, beyng also deare, and welcome to theyr freends among other respects, for this, that commonly they are verie pleasant in companie, and merily bespoken. For in Homer ye male reade, howe out of Nestors mouthe there flowed woordes sweeter than honie, wheras Achilles langage bited bitter. In Homer also *Olde men leaninge ouer Troie walles put foorthe a swete delinerid voice*. As to whiche regarde, theirs male be preferred before the verie grace of infancie, whiche sure is muche gracious, but yet partly disgraced, whan it lacketh speache, and

Dotage in olde men.

chattyng

chattyng, that ar euen the chiefeſt recreations of mans life. Adde hereto, that olde age toyeth muche in childzen, and childzen lykewiſe wyll euer bee aboute olde folkȝ. *Suche is nature in coupling lyke, and lyke together,* foꝛ what other thing is there vnlike betwixt them: ſaue that Elde, is fuller of wꝛincles, and noumbzeth moze yeeres: Els: their white heares, their totheles lawes, leſſe pꝛopoꝛtion of their bodies, mylklongynge, fumblynge in the mouthe, chattyng, fondneſſe, foꝛgetfulneſſe, recheleſneſſe, foꝛ bꝛiefe, all other condicions be of one degree, ſo that the nearer men apꝛoche to olde age, the nearer retourne thei to the foꝛme of childhode, till at laſſe, euen lyke childzen, no tediouſneſſe of lyfe, noꝛ ſence of death felt, they depart out of this woꝛlde. Olde men lik childrē

Can any of you compare now the other godds tranſfoꝛmacions, with this of myne? who what they dooe in waſte of diſpleaſure, me lifteth not to reherſe: But whom they moſte fauour, and are pleaſed with, them (trow I) thei are wont to chaunge into trees, into ſoules, into graſhoppers, ye oꝛ ſometime into ſerpentes, as if it were not a certaine kynde of periſhyng to be altered ſo into a new lykeneſſe: wheras I reduce the ſelfe ſame man, to the beſt, and moſt pleaſaunt parte of all his lyfe. That and if men had the grace to foꝛbeare quite from medlyng with wiſedome, leadyng foꝛth al theyꝛ lyfe in my ſeruice, now (I wene) there ſhoulde be no olde age at all, but rather they ſhoulde enioie a moſte happie, and continuall youthe. Foꝛ ſee you not (I pꝛaie you) howe theſe wyſemen, who are geuen to philoſophie, oꝛ ſome ſuche erneſt and graue ſtudie, dooe foꝛ the moſt parte waxe hoꝛe, beꝛoꝛe they be fully yonge men? Study & buſineſſe haſt foꝛward age.

men? whiche vndoubtedly cometh of cares, and incessent sharpe trauailyng of the braine, by littell and litle sokynge vp the liuely iuyce of the sprites: wheras my fooles on the other syde, be slicke, and smothe skinned, yea and well trussed together, *lyke hoglings of Acarnania*: suche as neuer shulde feele (I warrante you) any discommoditee of age, ne were it not that sometyme by chaunce, thei be infected with the contagious company of wysemen. Suche is the lotte of mans life, suffryng nothyng on all parts to be blissfull. And here I maie bringe in the approued auctoritee of the prouerbe, whiche affirmeth *Folie to be the onely lynke, that staieth fletyng youth, and kepeth of uombrous age*. Lyke as not causeles men saie by the Brabanters, that wheras yeres make other people the wyser, they, the lenger they lyue, are rooted the deper in folie, Yet for all that, where fynde you any nacion more iocounde, or meeter for the cōmon trade of liuyng, or that lesse feleth ages weight, than this dooeth? To whom as in countrey, so also in maners are my Hollanders next neighbours. For why should I sticke to call them mine? Seeyng they take my parte so earnestly, as therby thei haue gotten them my name for addicion, so littell wherof thei are ashamed, as they pas not to boste theim selues in it. Let theim that will now goe, and seke out, Medea, Circes, Venus, Aurora, or I wote neuer what maner fountaine, to haue their youth restored, wheras I onely am she that maie, and vse to dooe it. It is I that haue that merueylous iuyce, wherewith Memnous daughter proroged the youth of hir graundsire Tithonus. I am that Venus, through whose fauour Phaon

Folie the proroger and delaie of age.

waxed

wared yonge againe, whome therfore Sappho so much loued. Mine be those herbes, if any suche be, and mine be those charmes, and mine is that foũtayne, that not onely calle youthe backe agayne, ones being vanysshed but also (whiche is more desyrable) doeth conserue it euerlastinge. That and if ye all doo subscribe to this opinion, how nothing is more pleasaunt than youthe, and nothing more cumbresome thã age, now (I trow) ye perceiue how muche ye are beholding to me, seeyng I vpholde to you so great a weale, so great an euill excluded. But what speake I yet of mortall men? serche ye (hardly) all heauen, and who that list than scorne he my name, in case he finde anie of the godd? not crabbed, and dispisable, vnles my influence doo commende him. For whie is my cosyn Bacchus euer lyke a striplinge, and fayre busshed? Forsouth because like a witles and dronken compaignion, passing his time in banketts, daunces, and plaies, he hath neuer thus muche to doo with Pallas goddesse of wysedome. Finaly, so littel setteth he to be holden wise, as the obseruaunce that he requireth at mens hands is naught but maigames, shrouing?, and suche lyke fantsies. Neither is he offended with the prouerbe, calling him a foole, as, *Foolissher than Morychus.* For they call hym Morychus because vplandisshe hobbes in sport are wont at brynging home of haruest, to be smere his image set before temple dores, with muste, & grene fygges. And (lorde) with what iestes the writers of the olde Comedies doo taunt hym? *O fonde God* (saye they) *and woorthy who shoulde issue out of the grine of Jupiter:* Yet who woulde not rather chose, if choyse were offred, to bee suche a

Folie commaundeth the Gods also.

foole, and popie as he is, beinge euer merie conceyued, euer younglyke, euer prouoking men to laughter with his sporte and pleasantnesse, than Iupiter hym selfe, *withall his depe dissembled chere*, lokyng so sternly, as geueth terrour to the godds also? Or Pan, who with hys sodayne fraiments and tumultes, bringeth age ouer all things? Or Vulcanus the lyemphault smithe, full of smoke and embres, euer filthie with the toyle that he endureth in his forge? Or els Pallas my great aduersarie, being so muche redoubted because she beareth speare, and shielde: who euer sheweth a payre of skowling eyes? But why (I pray you) is Cupide alwayes lyke a ponge boye? Why? but that he is a trifler, neyther doing, nor thinking any wise acte, I warrant you. Why hath Venus also hir beautie *euer alike flowrishing* why? but that she is sibbe vnto me? euin as hir visage resembleth my fathers colour, for Homer nameth hir golden Aphroditis. So, she is euer smiling, if we credite the poets, or theyr counterfaytours the peynters. Moreouer, what godhead didde the Romaines woorship euer more religiously, than that of Flora the mother of all pleasures and solasses? Now be it on the other syde, who so wouldde narowlier serche, and consider the maner of liuing, euen of those *sowre and glomming gods*, either out of Homer, or other poets, he shuld finde them (no fayle) as foolishe, and dissolute, as these. For what needeth me to allege meaner Godds Folies? whan all ye haue at your fingers ends, howe greate a louer *thundring* Iupiter is? Also how graue Dame Diane forgetting womanhode, doeth naught but hounte all daye longe, bilitinge by starts yet hir sweete herte

Endymi-

Endymion? But as for me, I had leuer they shoulde heare theyr fault? tolde theim of Momus the god of Reprehension, at whose hands so manye tymes they haue ben taunted. Sauyng, that not longe agone they threw downe him and Atis, headlong togethers to the earth, because that euer with his wyse sawes and admonions he semed out of season to sarre agaynst their felicitie. Wherefore Momus therefore wandreth aboute lyke a vacabound, in as muche as no mortall man will gladly vouchesaue him herbourough, for feare of Iupiters displeasure, muche lesse that he can be receiued into princ? courtes, for there my Adulacion beareth the swinge, who agreeth no more with Momus, *than sabes doo with the woulfe.* So that synce he is ones remoued, the godd? aboue may now muche frankelier, and at more libertie playe theyr pageaunt?, *leadyng foorth an easie life,* (as Homer sayeth) wheras no countroller dare call theim to accoumpte. For (Lorde) the sporte that Priapus the great tooled god maketh them? what pastyme haue they at Mercurius, with his theft, and iuggling. Not so muche as Vulcane, but whan the Gods are sette at banbette, he plateth the iester, now with hys lymphaultynge, now with his skoffinge, and nowe with his ouerthwarte woord?, to prouoke them all to laughter. Than cometh Silenus that horseheadded louer, treadynge the hornepipe, with Poliphemus boy steoutly stampynge, and the Nymphes tripping barefooted, The *Satyres halfe gotes daunsing the Antikes,* And Pan with his oten flute singynge some rurall songe, doeth wonderously delite them, as whom, at that time, they had rather heare, than the Muses theym selues:

Flatery familier in princis courtes.

chiefely, whan they begin to be throughly chafed with theyr Nectar drinke. But what shuld I tel you of that the godds doo after suche compotacions? things so foolyshe, as I my selfe can scant refreyne from laughter. It is best therfore that herein I remembre Harpocrates for his silence, lest some curiosropper god, doo herken me blabbing foorth suche things of theym, as not Momus him selfe spake euer vnpunyshed. So nowe it is time, that (folowing Homers example) I leaue the godds aboue, and make returne to the earth, to discusse, how nothing here is either gladsome, or desirable, vnlesse the same begin at me. For first, ye se with how great prouidence, Nature the foundresse of mankinde hath forcast, that no where, in any part of mans lyfe the saulce of Folie should be wanted. For if wysedome, according to the Stoikes diffinition, *is nought els, than to be ruled by reason: and folie, to be ledde as affection wil.* Consider now (I pray you) how muche more Affection, than Reason, Iupiter hath put in men, to the ende theyr lyfe should not altogethers be heauy, and vnpleasant. As if ye shoulde compare an ounce to a pounde. Furthermore, he shutte vp Reason within the narowe compasse of mans head, leauinge all the rest of the bodie to affection: settinge also, two most violent tyrannes agaynst hir, that is to saye, Anger, raignyng in the fortresse of the herte: and concupiscence, whiche ruin to the lowest part of the bealy, doeth occuppe a large possession. Agaynst these two so stronge champions, how muche Reason may resiste, the commen trade of mens lyues declareth sufficiently. That whereas Reason, as muche as lieth in hir, doeth crie agaynst theim,

Folye natural to man kynde.

ruin

euin till she be hoarse, alleageing what honestie will, & requireth, yet daygne not they to obey, but much more furiously do repine at hyr, tyll at last she also, beynge weried, is fayne to yelde for vanquished. But in so muche as to man, borne to gouerne, and rule, Iupiter thought it meate to distribute Reason somewhat in a larger allise, to the ende yet he myght partly alaye the excesse, he called me (as he is wont) amongs the other goddes to counsayle: and by and by I gaue hym aduise lyke my selfe, that a woman should be associate vnto hym. A creature (god knoweth) bothe foolishe, and vnwittie. but natheles pleasaunt, and gracious. To the ende that throughe dayly company, and dwellynge together, she with hir Folie myght release, and make doulcet the sadnesse of mans courage. For where Plato semeth to doubte, *whether he should putte a man amongs reasonable, & vnreasonable creatures*, it was no more but to shew and expresse the notable Folie of that sexe. So that if any woman studieth to be counted wyse, she doeth naught els but labour to be twyse foolishe, *as if ye wold force a cow against hir nature to leap throughe a hope* For the fault is doubled, whā so euer one against kind, woulde counterfayte a glosse of vertue, to writhe the mynde otherwyse than of nature it plieth. Accordynge as the greke prouerbe sayeth, *An ape, is an ape, be she clothed in purpre*, so a woman is a woman (that is to say) a foole, what so euer parte she playe. Yet I thinke not that women are so very fooles, to bee angrie with me therefore, that I being Folie hir selfe, and a woman also, doo arrect Folie vnto theym. For and if they waye all thinges indifferently, they shall soone perceyue, how much

Iupiter cal led Folie to cōsail.

Folie of women.

woman

what commodities women haue by Folie.

much I am to be thanked, that for many respect? they are farre happier, than men be. Fyrst, for theyr beauties sake, beautie (I saye (whiche not withoute good cause is had in so great price by them, as vnder whose shielde and protection, they do exercyse tyrannye, yea ouer tyrannes theim self?. For els, whence cometh to men that sternes of theyr vysages, roughnesse of skin, and thickenesse of theyr beardes, beinge a very representacion of oldnesse, sauynge of the excesse, or rather disease of wisedome? wheras women with their smoth chekes, small voyces, and fine skinnes, doo euer shewe a certayne youthlikenesse. Agayne, what is it in thys life that women sooner coueite, than to be belyked of men? Tende not (trow ye) to this effect, so many their attyres? so many peinctinges, so many bathyng? so many heare curlyng?, so many glisshes? so many perfumes? so many wayes of nyce sympring, nycer smylyng, nycest going, be it but on an yntch of lether, and all to sette theym selfes foorth to the shewe? Further, what greater priuilege haue women ouer men, than their foolisshenesse? For what is it, that men permitte not as leafull, or at least to be borne with, in women? but vnder what other title, than of delectacion? But how doo they delite men, sauynge with their Folie? This to be true can not be denied, who so wyll consyder with him selfe, what fonde talke and deuises, a man is fayne to fynde out, as often as he entendeth to take fruicion and pleasure of a woman. And thus I haue declared you from what spring the fyrst and chiefest recreacion of this your lyfe is deriued. But yet some persons there be, namely olde men, rather good maltwor-

Foly of feastes & bankettes.

malthwormes, than women haunters, who contrarie to my supposition will putte theyr greatest felicitie in typpling, and good fare. As touchynge whiche poynte, I referre it to others iudgement if ani feast or banket be made in the right kinde, vnles women are at the same. But of this I am sure, how without the saulce of Folie, no banket can be to the somme. In sort that there want one, who with his owne, or counterfaite Folye, maie sturre the gests to laughter, than strayght is some iester, or other madde knaue sent for, with his bald and foolishe shoftes, to put awaye the sadde stylnesse of the feast. For els, what booted so many toynkettes, sweete meates, and daintries to balace the belie withall, vnles the eyes, the eares, and the whole mind, were also fedde with laughter, spoyte, and merry conceptes? But of all suche knackes I am the onely deuisour, like as this that now is solemnely taken vp at bankettes, *to chose a king by lottes, to play at tables, to bring good lucke, to quasse aboute the bourde, to synge carolles, with suche* lyke obseruãces, was neuer ordeigned bi the *seuen sages of Greece*, but throughe myne inuention, for the conseruation, and auaple of mankynde. Yet marke you the nature of all suche deuises, and ye shall see, that the more folie they smell of, the more they doo profite the life of mortall men. Whiche lyfe, in case it be ouerwayed with sadnesse, than sure it scantly deserueth the name of lyfe. And sadde must it nedes be, vnles with some kynd of pastyme ye wype away tedioulnesse, next cosyn to the other. Now some perchaunce there are, who littel will esteeme this kynde of pleasure also, but rather rest wholy on the league and acquaintãce of one frend

Folie and tour of friendship.

wyth

with an other. Affirmynge freendship to be the onely thinge, whiche should be sought and embraced before all the other commodities of your lyfe, beynge (saye they) so necessarie, and behouable, as neither ayre, nor fyre, nor water maye be more requisite vnto men, and therto so appropriately annexed, as the sonnes heate may as soone as friendship be spared among you: and besydes thys so honest a thinge (yf honestye as you thinke make ought to purpose) as not the philosophers theim selues doo sticke to put frendshyp euin amongs the chiefest weales of thys lyfe. But what wyll yee saye now, if I can proue my selfe to be boothe croppe, & roote, of this so great a benefite? Proue it to you (I saye) neither with Barbara, nor Celerent, nor any such Dialectical quaynt subtiltes, but euen of the playnest and bluntest facion, poyncte you to it, as it were wyth my fynger? Fyrst therfore whan you see a man flatter, dissemble, or wynke at his friendes faultes, yea, and sometyme owe fauour, or rather wonder at some great vices of his, takinge theim for vertues: doo you not count hym (I prare you) next sybbe to a foole?. What it an other take *some deformitee that his lēman hath for a great grace*, or a father, *whose childe is squynt eied, calleth hym natheles his pretie pinkeied boye*, is not this (trowye) playne folye? Let sages crie agayne and againe, that it is folie, yet this same folie is the glew that souldreth, and interteyneth friendes together. I speake of mortall men, of whome none lyueth without some faultz. So that, he maye well be holden for the beste, that is combred with the smallest. Wheras amongs these Goodz of wisedome, eyther no frendship can fasten at

Folie the glew of friendship.

ken at all, or if it doe, yet is it but a frounynge, and an vnpleasaunt friendship, and suche, as taketh place among? verie few of them. for it were to soze to saie among? none, seing the most part of men doe ouershote theim selues: yea, if I saide all, I might abyde by it, so many sundzie waies is euery wight subiect vnto Folie. And friendship is neuer properly knitte, but betweene men of egall estate and condition. That admitte sometime a maner amitie is so kindled betwene these wysemen: god knoweth yet how shozt a life, and continuance it shall be of, namely among? so wayward faultfinders, as commenly such sages are, being euer readie to find an hole, and tassyng as sharpe an eie vpon their frendes faultes, *as an Egle doth vpon hir praie.* But (Lozde) for all that how pozeblinde are they in their owne? not ones lokyng backe at the sachell hangyng behinde theim. In as muche than as the nature of men is suche, that no witte maie be founde, not lymed with some gaeat vices, in case ye adde therto the diuersitee bothe of mens inclinations, and ages, together with so many ouerlightes, so many errours, and chaungynge chaunces, as this mozrtall lyfe is disposed to, now I see not how the fruite of friendships pleasauntnesse shuld one halfe howze be conserued betwene so narow discussers of thing?, vnles the *remedie of forbearyng one an other*, whiche also in Greeke, is as muche to say, as Folie were added for a staie and maintenance of the same. But what saie ye? Cupide hym selfe the god of all loue and friendship, is he not blynde? to whom as oftentimes not fayze thyngs seeme faire, so lykewyse amonges you he bringeth to passe, that eche

Waiward nesse in friendshyp.

Forbearyng.

The god of loue blinde.

dooeth thynke his owne burde fayreſt, and lyke will euer cleue to lyke. Now though we ſee, howe commenly theſe thinges are done, and commenly laughed to ſcorne, yet ſuche fondneſſe is it that ſouldeth, & holdeth a pleaſaunt felowſhippe of life atwixe you. Further what I haue ſaide by friendſhip, muche more maie I ſaie by mariage. Which is to ſaie, *an inſeparable coniunction of man and woman.* But (Lorde) what diuorſementes, or inconuenient? worſe than diuorſmentes woulde not commenly happen, in caſe their daiely ſocietee, and dwellyng together, were not now with flatterie, nowe with daliance, now with ſporte, with forbearyng, with errour, with diſſemblyng (all of my garde I warrante you) bothe propped vp, and nourſhed? Good lorde how few ſpowſailes ſhoulde goe thorough, in caſe the wower wiſely afore hand did boult out, what wanton part? the tender, and to his ſemyng, ſhamefaſt maiden hath plaied longe afore he knew hir? Further, howe few mariages ones ſolemniſed, ſhuld continue in force, vnles the moſt part of the wiues pageant? were cloked, either thorough hir huſbandes negligence, or doltyſhenelle? All this, and woorthily, is arrected to Folie: Yet dooeth this folie make the wife to be cheriſhed of hir huſbande the huſband lykewyſe of his wife, their hous to be quiete, and thaffinitee betwene their freend? to remaine. The cockeholde wrotſde, or what other name ye lyſt to geue hym, is laught to ſcorne, whan with his lippes he ſucketh in the teares of his ſcant omeſt wife. Yea good enough. Now muche better ſhall he fynde it to be decepued ſo, than thorough ielouſie to frette hym ſelfe, and ſet all thinges on a roare, For ſhort concluſion

tion (I saie) so muche lacketh that any maner frendshyp, societie of life, or companyng together, maie without mine acceſſe be pleasant, or longe lyked, as not the people wouldе longe beare theyr ruler, nor a seruaunt his maister, a mayde hir mastres, a scholer his teacher, a friende his friende, the husband his wife, a lender the hirer, a chamberfelow his chemberfelow, nor a bourdmate, his bourdmate, vnles by turnes atwixte them selues they should sometyme erre, sometyme flatter, somtimes winke for the nones, & now & than coumfort their bittred tast with some hony of foolishenesse. These thyngs (I wote well) seme right meruaylous vnto you but geue me leue a little, and ye shall here further.

No societe of life without Folye.

I praie you, can he loue any bodie, that loueth not him selfe? can he agree with any bodie, that discordeth with him selfe? Maie he please others, that is displeasaunt, and tedious to him selfe? But settyng me aside, so much lacketh, that any man can abide or beare what others dooe, as ye shall se him fall out with him selfe, mislyke what so euer he dooeth, and be his owne hater. For nature not in few pointes rather a stepdame than a mother, hath grafted this euil propertee in mens heades, namely theirs that are skilfull, that euer they despise what qualitee is theyr owne, and settе more by that they see in others. Wherby it commes to passe, that all the giftes and graces, of this lyfe, are quyte lorne and defaced. For what auaileth beautie? beautie (I saie) the verie chiefest gifte that the immortall Godds dooe geue here, if he that hath it, reketh not of it? Or what auaileth youthe? If it be drowned with the leuaine of lorе sadnesse. Finally in any maner

None acceptable to him selfe without Folie.

trade of life, what can a man goe about to doe semely, and with a good grace, either by him selfe, or afore others (as in deede, to expresse and set a thyng foorthe lively, is not onely the chiefest poincte of cunnyng, but also the verie head of any thyng put in vre) if this my damoisell Selfloue be not his aduaunter, whom woorthily I holde therfore in stede of my syster: so busily she trauailed to my behalfe in euery place. And what can be more holy, than one to lyke him selfe, & stande in his owne conceite: but than againe, what thing can be proper, or becommyng, or well doorn, in case the doer of the same misliketh him selfe in it? So that take away this fault of Selflykyng (whiche is euen the very releffe of mans lyfe and doynges, and by and by ye shal see the Oratour rold in his mattier, the Musicien mislyked withall his discante, the Plaier hissed out of the place, the Poete and his muses laught to skorne, the Peincter and his art naught set by, the Phisicion for all his medicines walke an hungred, briefly, this set a syde, he that semed beautifull Nireus, shall appeare to be more vgly and misfauoured than Therfites, in stede of fayre Phaon, as hore and wrincled as Nestor was, for Minerua, a sovve) as the prouerbe saieth) for an eloquent speaker, the fowlest stammerer in a countrey, and for a courtlyke felow, the rudest hobbe that maie be piked from the plough. So behouable is it (loe) that euery man bose clappe him selfe on the backe, and with some flattrie be commendable to him selfe, ere he can be commended of others. Finally wheras it is the greattest parte of felicitee, for a man to deuyse to bee, as he is in deede, that dooeth Selfloue procure you by a

Selfloue.

reder waie. For no man, how euer vile he be, will so dispayre in him selfe, as vtterlie to mislyke either his witte, his kynred, dwellyng place, occupacion, or countrey. As an Irishe man woulde not chaunge his nacion with an Italian, nor a Turke with an Athenien, nor yet a Tartar with the verie Iles of fortune: whiche so beyng, how singuler than is natures prouidence (trow ye) in so great varietee of thyngs, to make theim all yet of a lyke proporcion: as to whom she hath bene somewhat sharce in other giftes, there she putteth a little more selflykyng, but this I spake not very circumspectly, seyng the same selflykyng, maie woorthily be esteemed for the greatteste gyft of all. Here nowe I recke not muche, to passe ouer vntouched, how no maner acte, or noble deede was euer attempted, nor anye arte or science inuented, other, than of whiche I might fully be holden first author. For as touchyng warre, the very head and spring of all great enterprises, whiche so commonly ar praised, and enrolled by historiens, is it not (trow ye) a foolisshe practise, to beginne such variaunce, as euer bothe parties receiue more domage then profite by: (for of those that leaue their carkasses in the fielde, as did the Megarensiens, neuer counte is made) But yet, whan armies ioygne together, and trūpetts blow vp bloudy notes, to what stede I praie you can these good father Sages serue: who soked vp with longe studie, leane, and colde of bloudde, maie scantly drawe theyr wynde: Maie than muste fatte and lustie bloudds doe the feate, hauing boldnesse with the moste, and witte with the leste. Vnles perchaunce some would chose suche a souldiour as was Demosthenes, who so-

Eche man through Folie standeth in selfe conceite.

Foli autor of al noble actes and artes.

Warre.

lowynge Archilocus the poetes rede, scarce lookynge his enemies in the face, threw downe his shielde and ranne awaie, as cowardly a warriour, as he was a wyse oratour. But *Counsaile in warres* (saie they) *is of great importaunce*, and as for that I sticke not muche, that counseile in a captayne is requisite, so it be warlyke, and not philosophicall. For commenly they that bringe any valiant feate to passe are *good bloudded, venturers, compaignions, swasshers, dispatchers, bankrowtes*, with suche lyke, and none of these *Philosophers candlewasters*. who how unmete they be to serue for any common affaire, or purpose among men, we maie be taught by the example of Socrates him selfe, the onely wyseman, but unwysely iudged by Apollos oracle. That wheras on a tyme he went about to haue saide his minde in a certaine mattier to the commons of Athenes, he lefte of sodeinly, beyng all to laught to scorne. How be it this Socrates, as in one pointe (me semeth) was not all wide, in that he woulde not take upon him the name of a wiseman, but rather ascribed the same unto god onely, and thought it best for a wiseman not to busie him selfe or medle with matters of the common weale, unles perhaps he might haue sayde more rightly, that who so woulde be taken among the noumbre of men, shoulde not meddle to muche with wisedome. For I pray you, what draue Socrates upon his araignment, to drinke poyson, for the death he was condempned to, saiyng onely that his excellent, that his goodly qualitee of wysedome? Because, whiles whole daies together he trifled out the tyme *in disputacions upon the cloudes, upon Idees, and by geometrie peyned him selfe to meate a flies*

feete

ſeete, diſcuſſing alſo how a gnatte, beinge ſo little a vermine, myght yelde ſo great a ſounde, he neuer applide him ſelfe to learne thinges pertaygnyng to this common trade of lyfe. But now cometh Plato his diſciple to defende his maiſter at the barre: a gaie Aduocate (I promiſe you) who beynge offended with the noyſe of the people thꝛoungyng about him, could ſcante make an ende of the fyꝛſte clauſe of his tale. And what ſaie you by Theophraſtus? who takyng vpon him, to ſpeake vnto a great aſſemblie, as ſoone as he ſtoode vppe, by and by coulde ſaie neuer a wooꝛde, *as if he had ſeene a woulfe at vnwares,* and how ſhould he than haue encouraged ſouldiours to fight? Dꝛ els Iſocrates? who of a certaine naturall timoꝛouſnes, durſt neuer afoꝛe audience open his lippes? Marcus tullius, the father of Romaine eloquence, euer with an vnſemely trembling began his oꝛacions, as it were a ſobbyng childe, whiche Quintilian enterpꝛeteth to be the ſigne of a ware and wiſe Oratour who pondred wel the waightineſſe of his mattier. But whan he ſayeth ſo, dooeth he not plainely confeſſe, wyſedome to be an obſtacle againſt any bolde feate: Foꝛ what will ſuche ſhꝛimpiſhe bodies dooe (trow ye) whan it cometh to handſtrokes, that are almoſt dead foꝛ feare, whan they ſtriue but with bare wooꝛdꝛ? And yet after all this (on godꝛ name) is that wooꝛthy ſawe of Plato muche cummended, *how thoſe common weales moſt happily ſhould flouriſhe, that were gouerned by philoſophers, or whoſe gouernours applied themſelfes to philoſophie.* No no, if ye loke in hiſtoꝛies, ye ſhall fynde, no rulers were euer moꝛe peſtilent to a common weale, than if the ſame at any time fell into the handꝛ of ſuche one, as was geuen

Wiſemen baſtardes cychco to fight.

ſpeake in a preaſe.

to any

to any sorte of philosophie. For proufe wherof, I alleage vnto you the two Catons, thone wherof, with his headie and frantike accusations, disturbed greatly the quyete of Rome citee. the other, in goyng about ouer wisely to protecte the same, did vtterly subuerte it. And loigne ye hardly to theim bothe Brutus and Cassius, with the two Gracchi, yea and Cicero him selfe, for as pestilent a citesen amongs the Romains, as Demosthenes was to the Atheniens common weale.

Lykewyse, what trow ye by Marcus Aurelius? I admitte he was a good emperour, and yet could I wrest that praise also from him, because his to muche philosophe: shyppe made him odious and hatefull to the people. But admitte (I saie he was good, yet truly more pernicious w s he to the common weale, in leauyng so vngracious an ympe, as Comodus was, for successour in his state, than euer he was profitable throughe his owne good wealdynge of the same. For commenlye this kynde of men, that are bookishe, and geue theim selfe to suche peuishe disciplines, like as in other thinges, so also in childer gettyng haue very ill lucke, as if nature of pietee (I wene) prouided that this plage, this disease (I saie) of wisedome, should not sprede ouer largely amongs men. So Cicero had a soonne, farre vnlyke hym in condicions, And Socrates, that wise wiseman had childzen, *lyker to their mother than their father*, As one writeth merely, that is to saie, they were fooles, Now though these wisemen be as vnapte for all publike offices and affaires, *as an asse is to singer an harpe*, yet might it soso be abidden, if they were not also as vntowarde in any priuate dutie perteynyng to this

Wysemen children commonly fooles.

Wysemen vnfitte for any functi on of this life.

this life. For bidde ones one of these sages to diner, and either with his silent glommyng, or his darke and eluishe probleme he wyll trouble all the bourde. Desyre hym to take handz in a bralle, ye will saie *a Camill daunceth*. Bringe hym to a Mydsomer watche, or a stage plaie, and euin with his verie looke he wyl seeme to disdeyne the peoples pastyme, so that *wise dan Cato must be fayne to auoyde the place, because he can not spare his frownyng*. Let hym lyght on a knotte of good company talkyng merily, and by and by euery wight holdz his peace. If he must bye anie thing, make a bargaine or briefely doo ought of those thingz, whiche this commen life cannot be ledde without, then sooner wyll ye take him for a blocke, than a reasonable creature. So muche lacketh (loe) that he may stand his countrey, or his freendz in profitable steede, who neither is skylled in thingz dayly enured, and muche differeth from the commen opinion, and maners of the other people. Per consequent wherof, he must nedes deserue theyr hatred and displeasure, through the great diuersitie of lyuynges, and dispositions atwixe them. For and yf ye lyst to iudge indifferentli, is there ought doen here amongz mortall men not full of foly, bothe by fooles, and afore fooles? So that if one onely wight woulde take vpon hym to kicke against all the rest, hym wolde I aduyse, that (as Timon did) he shuld shrincke into some desert, there to enioy his wysedome to hym selfe.

Wisdome bredeth hatred.

But to returne to mi former purpose (I are you) what maner of charme it was, that enduced those aũciẽt stonie, woodden, and rude men in the worldz tyrste age (as poetz fiegne) dispersed so a brode, to lyue together

Folie the founder of states and commen weales.

at the browes, to recouer a littell, I wotte nere what Fame, whiche either is nothynge, or nothinge is more vayne than it. But in the meane whyle, ye ought to comme me thanke, for suche, and so many commodities, as they haue foūd out towards the better state of your lyfe. And that whiche is moste sweete of all) ye doo peruse the fruite of other mens madnesse. Than sic seyng I haue this chalenged vnto me the praise of fortitude, and of industriousnesse, what if I cleame Prudence also? perhappes some wyll say, as soone myght I goo about to myngle fyre and water. But for all that I hope to bringe it to passe, if as hytherto you haue doen, ye vouchesaue me your eares, and attentiuenesse. And fyrst of all, if Prudence consisteth in longe practise and experience of things, vnto whether of these may the honour of that name better square? Either to this wyseman, who partlye for shame, and partly for dastardnesse of herte, attempteth nothinge, or els that foole, whome neither shame being shameles nor perill, being reckeles, may feare from proving any thynge. A wyseman repoyseth hym selfe to his bookes, and there learneth naught but mere trifling distinctions of woordes. A foole in ieoperdinge, and goynge presently where things are to be knowne, gathereth (vnles I am deceyued) the perfect true prudence. whiche Homer seemeth, notwithstandinge his blyndnesse to haue seen, whan he sayde thus, *A foole knoweth the thynge, that is ones dooen.* For there be two stronge lettes against suche knowlege of things to be gathered, that is to say, shame and dreade: shame, that taketh a mist before mens myndes: and dreade, that shewing the perils

Merie prudence to come of folie.

Fooles iudge right lier than wisemen.

Lettes of knowlage.

les,

les, discounsayleth men from ventring any enterprises But I Folie maye, and am wonte to wype those lettes cleane awaye. Yea, few men consider, how many wais els it auayleth to blousshe at nothinge, and dare doo euery thinge. But now (loe) and if ye take prudence after the rate, as whan it resteth in iudgement and discourse of thingz, herken ye (I praye you (howe farre they are wyde thereof, who doo make it their chiefest profession. For fyrst it is not vnknowen, how all humaine thingz lyke the *Silenes or duble images of Ascibiades*, haue two faces muche vnlyke and dissemblable, that what outwardly seemed death, yet lokyng within ye shulde fynde it lyfe: and on the other side what semed life, to be death: what fayre, to be foule: what riche, beggerly: what cunnynge, rude: what stronge, feable: what noble, vile, what gladsome, sadde: what happie, vnlucky: what friendlye, vnfriendlye: what healthsome, noysome. Briefely the Silene ones being vndone and disclosed, ye shal fynde all thinges tourned into a new semblance. If these woordz to some seme spoken to clerkly, goo to, I will expounde theym more playnely. I pray you, who is he that confesseth not a prince to be bothe riche, and a great lorde? but set case he hath no good qualities of the mynde, nor wyth all those gooddz he hath, can be satisfied. now is he not riche, but poorer than the poorest. Than againe admit he be giuen to soundrie vices: now is he no lord, but more subiecte than a seruaunt: and after this rate maye ye skanne also the others. But this is enough for exemple. Now it maye be, ye muse what I meane hereby, but geue me leaue yet a littell further. If one at

The Silenes of Ascibiades.

 asolemne

a solemne stage plaie, would take vpon him to pluche of the players garmentes, whiles they were sayinge their partes, and so discipher vnto the lokers on, the true and natiue faces of eche of the plaiers, should he not (trow ye) marre all the mattier? and well deserue for a madman to be pelted out of the place with stones? ye should see yet straightwaies a new transmutation in things: that who before played the woman, should than appeare to be a man: who seemed youth, should, shew his hore heares: who countrefayted the kynge, should tourne to a rascall, and who played god almightie, should become a cobler as he was before. Yet take awaie this errour, and as soone take awaye all togethers, in as much as the feignyng and counterfaytynge is it, that so delighteth the beholders. So lykewyse all this life of mortall men, what is it els, but a certayne kynde of stage plaie? whereas men come foorthe, disguised one in one arraie, an other in an other, eche playinge his parte, till at last the maker of the play, or bokebearer causeth them to auoyde the shaffolde, and yet sometyme maketh one man come in, two or three tymes, with sundrye partes and apparayle, as who before represented a kinge, beinge clothed all in purpre, hauynge no more but shifted hym selfe a litle, should shew hym selfe agayne lyke an woobegon myser. And all this is dooen vnder a certayne veile or shadow, whiche taken awaye ones, the play can no more be plaied. Here nowe if one of these wisemen, come (I weene) from heauen, did sodienly appeare, & say, *how euin this great prince, whom all men honor as their god and soueraigne, deserueth skarce to be called mã, seing like the brute beastes, he is trained*

Errour a vayling.

this world a stage plai of Folie.

Is trained by effections, and is none other than a seruaunt of the baseſt sort, seing willingly he obeith so many, and so, vile vices his maisters. Or than agayne, wolde bidde some other, who mourned for his fathers or friendes deceaſe, rather to laughe, and be merie, because such dying to this world is the beginning of a better life, whereas this here, is but a maner death at it were. Furthermore, wolde call an other glorying in his armes and auncestrie, bothe a villaine, and a baſtarde, because he is so many diſcentes diſalied from vertue, whiche is the onely roote of true nobilitie. And in ſuche lyke ſorte would raple vpon all the reſt. I praye you, what ſhulde he preuaile therby, but make men take him for frantike & diſtraught? For surely as nothing can be more fooliſſhe than wyſedome out of place, so is nothing more fonde than prudence out of ſeaſon. And doeeth he not out of ſeaſon (trow ye) that plieth not him ſelfe as the world goeth? nor will not take the market as it ryſeth? nor at leaſte remembre the law of quaffyng, *Other drinke thy drinke or riſe, and go thy waie?* On the other ſyde, it is a very wyſemans parte to couete to knowe nothing beyond his hand?, and either as the whole multitude of other men doo, to diſſemble gladly, or to erre, and be decey-ued with the moſte. But euin this is Folye (saye they). And in good faieth I wyll not muche denie it, vpon condition againe they graunt me, that to diſſemble, or erre ſo, is the right playing of the pageant? of this lyfe.

But (Lorde) a thing now is come to my remembrance ſhall I ſpeake it, or kepe it in? and why ſhulde I kepe it in, ſyns it is truer than trueth it ſelfe? but it is beſt for me in ſo waighty a mattier as it is, to praye the Muſes in myne ayde, whom poetes call vppon oftentimes for

Folie the guide vnto Sapience.

mes for the veriest trifles they write. Come ye hither therfore a litle ye *Iones daughters*, whiles I proue that no man can attayne vnto that excellent Sapience, the very cacell (as they name it) of felicitie, vnles Folie be their guide and leader. Inprimis, I take it for all readie graunted, that al the affections of man, pertayne vnto Folie. In as muche as philosophers put this difference betweene a wyse man, and a foole, that *the one is ledde by reason, the other by sensualitie*. And therfore doo the Stoikes seclude all affections from a wyseman, as so many diseases of the mynde. But that not withstandinge, these affections are not onely sette in steede of pilots, for suche as woulde recouer the porte of wysedome, but also in any acte of vertue, are lyke certaine prikes, or incitations prouoking a man to doo well. How euer in this poinct the Archestoike Seneca strongly agaynsaieth me, who in no wyse wyll a wyseman shoulde haue any maner affection in hym, but whan he taketh that away, he leaueth man, no mã, but rather a new found god without bodily sence such as neuer was, nor neuer shall be. Yea, to speake playnlier, he doeth naught els than fourme a stone image of a man, without fealing, or any maner inclination perteynyng to a man in deede. Let the Stoikes therfore (if they list) take theyr wyseman to theym selfes, and make muche on hym alone, or (if thy thynke good) go and dwell with him in Platos cittee, or in the lande of Fairie, or Vtopia. For whiche of you woulde not lothe, and bliste you from the company of suche maner a man, *as were mortified, and benumbed in al those sensis and vnderstandinges, that naturally other men are ledde by: that had no*

The difference betwene a foole and a wyseman.

had no affections reigning in him? nor wolde no more be stirred with loue, or compassion, than if he were a flint stone? that in nothing could ouershoote him selfe, but rather lyke Argus see, and cast all thinges to the vttermost? Forgeue no man? be onely pleased with him selfe? esteeme him selfe onely to be riche? onely to be a kynge? onely to be a freeman? briefly, onely all thinges, but in his owne conceite onely? that cared for no frendes? friend him selfe to no man? wolde not sticke to defie the Gods? and what so euer is done of other men in this presentlife, to laugh at it and dispise it, as a verie madnesse? Yet suche a maner quaynt beaste is this complete wiseman of theirs. I pray you, if the choice went by voyces, what citee woulde haue suche a gouernour? what armie suche a capitaine? nale what woman wolde desire suche an husbande? or who woulde bydde suche a geest to his house? or what seruaunte pyke him out, ez continue with a maister of so monstruous conditions? On the other syde, who would not sooner preferre any one chosen euin amonges the thickest of the people? who beynge a foole, could aptly either gouerne, or obey fooles, please the myndes of suche as be lyke vnto hym, whiche is the moste parte, be treatable to his wyfe, gladly seene of his frendes, mearie in companie, and lastly woulde thinke nothynge vnbesemyng hym, that other men vse commenly to dose. But I wene, ye be werie now of this theyr wyseman, as I, for my part, was a good whyle agoe. Let vs passe therfore ouer to some other matter. Admitte than, some one, (as the Poetes feigne by Iupiter) shulde out of an high high place behold and see in how many miseries mans life is wrapped, how wretched and vile his byrthe is,

The description of a wyseman.

Onely Folly releueth the miseries of this lyfe.

how harde his bringyng vp, how weake and pelylynge his childhode, how trauailesome his youthe, how heauy his age, and last how fearefull his death were. Further, durynge all his life, what bandes of sickneſſes do assaile him, what narow chaunces hange ouer his head, what displeasures come vpon hym, how in all thynges he fyndeth more galle than hony, beſydes the iniuries whiche one of you scourgeth an other withall, as peruertee, enpoſonment, worldely shame, rebukynge, rackyng, gyle, treaſon, sklaunder, diſcention, diſceite (but now I goe about to tell the graueſt of the ſea) that for what offence men deſerued ſuch miſeries, or what god being their heauie lorde, condemned theim to leade their lyues ſo peſtred and plonged in the ſame, ye ſhall pardon me, from expreſſing, as not leeful for me at this preſent to vtter vnto you, but who ſo ſhoulde (I ſaye) conſyder all theſe thinges accordyngly, myghte it not moue hym to approue the example, and deede of the virgins of Meleſia, be it neuer ſo piteous to reherſe: For ye ſhall vnderſtande, that willyngly, vppon no apparente cauſe why, they all hunge theim ſelues. . . But ſeeyng we chaunce to ſpeake of voluntarie deathe, I are you, who were thoſe, that for tediouſneſſe of this lyfe, did rather preuent death with their owne handes? Were thei not ſuch as boarded neareſt vpon wiſedome? among whom (to let paſſe Diogenes, Xenocrates, Cato, Caſſius, Brutus, and ſuche lyke) Chiron, the wiſe Centaure, hauynge graunt of the goddes, to liue euer (ſo lykynge hym) in their ſtate of immortalitee, woulde none of it, but choſe rather to die. Ye maie ſee therfore what inconuenience ſhuld enſue, if men were com-

menly

menly wise. So that we had nede of a new Prometheus, a new mowlde, and a new earth, to make men of, vnles I partely through ignorance, partly through vnceckefulnesse, not seeldome through obliuion of peynes passed, sometyme through hope of better fortune, yea and now and than sauouryng their bittred taste with a little heny of pleasure, did not in so manyfolde euilles releue and succour theim. In sort, that lothe they are to die yet, though the fatall spindell of their lyfe beyng ronne out and expyred, Charons bote hath more than quarter ebbe taried for their passage hence, So that how lesse cause they haue, why they shoulde lyue, yet so muche leefer is life vnto theym, not that they fele any combraunce of the same. For it procedeth of my goodnesse (I warrant you) that commenly ye see olde men, of so hore and tremblyng age, as scant the figure of a man remaineth vnto theim, beyng bothe *fumblers, dotardes, tothles, griselles, bald*, or rather to descriue theim by Aristophanes termes) *Nastie, crokebackt, wrinkeled totheshaken, and lame of their best lim (which for womanhoode, I name not)* so desirous yet of lyfe, and so coltishe, as some one of theim will die his white heares, and shaue hym selfe twise a daie: an other will decke his balde crowne with a peruke: an other sette new tethe in his head, taken perhaps out of some hogg? chappes: an other fall in loue with some yonge pig? nie, vsyng more fondnesse in suche kynde of daliaunce than any youngman weld. For as touchyng suche Deathes dettours, and veraie Graueporers, as euin at theyr last cast wedde younge wenches vndowed, but meter to serue other mens turnes than theyrs, that is a thyng so commenly had in

Olde men desirous to lyue yet.

 vse,

vle, as in a maner now it is arrested for a great praise and charitable kindnesse vnto theim. But this is no-
Oldwome thynge, in comparison of the pleasant spectacle, whiche ye maie haue at many of these oldwomen, whyo beynge neuer so muche palled with longe age, yea and so carcasslike, as if they had lately come from deathes Court, will euer yet haue this prouerbe in their mouthes (lyse is lyse) stillplaie the wantons, and still be tuppyng. Or at lest hyre some younge Phaon for mede to doue the thynge, still daube theyr lither chekes with peintynge, neuer goe from the glasse, shew out their slaggie and pendant duggs, prouoke their stale nature with hot restoratiues, sitte vp at bankettes, daunce gallards, write loueletters. &c. These thinges are mocked rommenly, for the greatest folies (without question) that maie be. But yet do these my olde gurles not a little lyke theim selues herein, takyng it for a singuler and onely delight, as if they swamme vp to the chinnes in a sea of hony, wherin who but I doeth vphold them? and yet these deynty wisemen for al theyr scornfulnes, I woulde they shoulde no more but perpend thus with them selues, whither it be better through suche foly to leade a sugred life, or elles standyng euer vppon narowpoynct of wysedome, to seke (as a man woulde saie) an halter to hange withall? For how so euer suche foolisshe prankes are thought to breede an euil name, I praie you, what mattier is that to my fooles, who eyther sele not what the inconuenience of an ill irepute meaneth, or if they sele it, can so little set by it, and easely passe it ouer? If a Mylstone fall vpon thy head, that is an euill in deede: but as for shame, reproch, losse

of re-

of reputacion, or euil speche, these maie do the as much hurt as thou felist theim: that and if thou felyst theym not, than are they no euils at all. *For what hurteth the, the peoples hissing, as lōge as thou clappest thy self on the back* yet who hath the grace to do so, vnlesse I Folie do arme him therto? But now (me thing?) I haue the philosophers ones more in my toppe. For that is (saye they) *euin the greatest miserie of all, to be blinded so with Folie, to erre so, to be deceiued so, to be ignorant so.* Nay verilyer, that is it to be a man. And yet I see not why they shuld call you miserable therfore, in as muche as ye be borne so, ye be ordeygned so, and made so, and such is the commen destiney lotted to euery of you. For nothyng maie properli be called miserable, that agreeth with the kind it cometh of, vnles perchaunce some woulde thynke a mans nature were to be lamented, because he can not flie as burdes dooe, nor goe on all foure as other beastes dooe, nor fence hym with his hornen as bulles doe, But than by lyke argument, why call they not a fayre horse miserable: because he neuer learned gremmer? or eateth no Rostemeate? or els a bulle vnhappy, because he is not shapen to throw the barre? Ergo, as an horse, who can not his grammer, is not wretched, no more a man for his Folie is miserable, because it agreeth so aptly with his nature. But ones againe these eluishe Sophisters heaue at me. *The knowlage (saie they) of disciplines is peculiarly geuen to man. throughe helpe wherof, what he lacketh by nature, he may supplie with his witte and learnyng.* A gaie mattier, as who saieth nature, whiche in gnattz, yea and in herbes, and trees, hath so diligently doone hir parte, in man onely shoulde haue shewed

Miserable it is not that agreth with Nature.

hir selfe defective, and a niggard, where through he needed to make recourse for ayde vnto disciplines. Which disciplines Theutus that dismall spirite, who neuer willed good to mankynde, did first fynde out, for your vtter destruction, so little auailyng towardes felicitee, as rather they doue hynder you from it, for whiche purpose they were chiefly adorned, as Plato verie elegantly inducth that wyse Aegyptien kynge to argue, disputynge vpon the first inuention of wrytynge. So therfore, sciences came in first, with the residue of the plages of mans lyfe, and founde out by the verie same authours, who lykewyse are authours of all mischiefe, that is to sale, by diuelles: wheruppon also they haue their name grounded. for Dæmon, signifieth cunnyng or a knower. But the good simple people of the olde golden worlde, without any disciplines at all, liued onely as Nature taught, and instincted them. For what neded they any grammer, whan al the world vsed but one speche? whiche made also to none other purpose, saue that one might vnderstande an other? Or wherto serued Logyke whan no controuersie of woordes myght make a double meanyng? Or, what place hadde Rhetorike, whan none contended with others? Or to what effect stode Lawe, seeyng as yet euill maners reigned not, wherupon good lawes (no doubt) were first grounded? Further, they were more religious, and godly, than with an vngodly, curiositee to enserche the secrets of Nature, the quantitee of the sterres, their courses, or influences, or the hydden causes of thyngs, supposyng it against godds forbode, that they beyng mortall and erthly men, shoulde struggle to know

Disciplines vnprofitable or rather hurtful to man

knowe beyonde their degrees. Muche leſſe that euer any ſuche madneſſe came in their braines, as ones to thynke vpon the inquerie of thyngꝭ ſette aboue the ſterres. But whan by little and little the pureneſſe of the golden age decaied, than were ſcienꝭ inuented (as I ſaied) by wicked ſpꝛites, but right fewe as yet, and pꝛactiſed by as fewe. Than afterwardꝭ, the ſuperſticion of the Chaldees, and idle newfangledneſſe of the Grekes added (I wene) moꝛe than ſix hundꝛed others, beyng mere vexations of mens bꝛaines, in ſo muche as Grammer alone, is hable to kepe a man taſke whiles he liueth. And yet (loe) euen amongꝭ ſuche ſciences, thoſe we ſe had in moſte pꝛice, that dꝛaw neareſt to the common ſence and capacitee of all men (that is to ſaie) to Folie. Foꝛ as foꝛ Diuines, they maie well enough walke an hongerd: Mathematicall pꝛofeſſours blowe their nayles: Aſtronomers are laught to ſcoꝛne: Sophiſters are naught ſet by. Onely a Phiſicion (as Homer ſaieth) *is more worth then twentie of the reſt*, yea and commonly the rather, the vncunnynger, & leſſe circumſpect the vndertaker of any of thoſe vſuall ſcienꝭ is, the moꝛe yet is he regarded & allowed euen amongs great men alſo. Lyke as Phiſike, accoꝛdinge as many now a dsies dooe wꝛeſt it, is naught els than a member of Adulacion, as well as Rhetorike: Next place wherunto is geuen to Ciuilians and Lavviers: but I am in doubt, whether it be the ſeconde, oꝛ the fyꝛſt, by the rules and ſtatutes of the vniuerſitee: of whoſe pꝛofeſſion as I will ſaie nothynge, ſo other men are wont with one conſent to haue it in deriſion, as a certaine kynde of Aſſelyke philoſophie: but yet theſe

Aſſeheades

Asseheades be they, that rule all the rost, and enlarge their possessions, wheras a Diuine in the meane; while lookynge ouer all his bookes of diuinitee, can hardlye pyke him out a radishe roote for his diner, doynge battayle continually with gnattz and lyse. And therfore lyke as sciences are the more happie, an auailable, the nearer affiuitee they haue with Folie. So are those men most happi, who altogethers maie absteyne from medlynge with any sciences, and folow Nature onelie for theyr guide and maistres, who in no parte of hir is lame, or insufficient, as longe as it suffreth vs to kepe our selues within hir bands. For Nature abhorreth counterfeytyng, and farre more towardly doeth it flouryshe, that with leaste arte and cure is tended to. For see you not how amongz brute beastes, and burdes also, those lyue moste wealthyly, that haue least to dooe with disciplines? nor are subiect to ani others gouernmente, sauyng Natures? The verie bees (trow ye how happy and merueilous is their propertee?) and yet (pardie) they haue not all theyr sences. What housewright by Geometrie founde euer out suche maner buildynge, as theyr commes are of? What Philosopher did euer fourme suche a common weale as theirs is? Contrary, an horse because he draweth nerest) to mans sense, and is conuersant amongz men, is therfore pertaker also of suche miseries as men are subiect to. As who not seldome, whiles he is ashamed to bee ouer ronne for the belle, dooeth tyre him selfe, and in battaile whiles he seeketh victorie, dooeth oftentymes draw his guttz after him. Besydes the snafles and bittz, he is broken with, the spurres hee is gyrded with,

Thynges without arte the more hap ly flourishi

the

the fables enpriſonment he is hampred with, the whippes he is laſhed with, the cogill he is talked with, the halters he is tied with, the ryders he is laden with, and briefly, all that tragedie of his bondage, whiche willing lie in a maner he tooke vpon him (yf we geue credite to Aeſopes fables) whyles (as theſe valiaunt men do) his deſyre was to be wroken on the harte hys enemie. Now howe muche leeſer is the life of theſe prettie ſmall burdes who onely Nature pricketh theim, lyue from hande to mouthe, in depe quietneſſe, as longe as men will let theym alone? That and if they fortune to be taken, and made to ſynge in a cage, yet (lorde) how muche they want than of theyr native grace, and properneſſe? *So farre more lively ye ſhall finde it, that rather nature inducetb, than that arte conſtreigneth.* I can neuer therfore fully commende Pythagoras, who whan vnder diuerſe bodies and likeneſſes he had ben al thinges, *a Philoſopher, a man, a woman, a kinge, a priuate perſon a fiſſhe, an horſe, a frogge, yea* (I wene) *a ſponge alſo*, iudged yet no kynde of creature more miſerable than man, becauſe all the reſte were content to liue as Nature had limitted theym. Onely man would preaſſe to paſſe his bandes. Yea and therfore among men, he preferred alſo the Ideote, and ſimple vulgars, before other learned and reputed perſons. So Grillus (I thynke) was better aduiſed, than Vliſſes, for all hys deepe witts, *in that he had rather grunt ſtil in the ſtie, being chaūged into a hogge through Circes ſorceries, than waifaring with him, to ſuffre ſo many wretched, and greeuous chaunces.* In whiche poynct I take it, that Homer *alſo the father of fables*, dooeth conſent wyth me: that where in many

Pythagoras counten any brute creature to be happier than man.

places he calleth all mortall men bothe *wofull and wretched*, and than agayne speakyng of Vlisses, the exemple (as he makes hym) of a perfite wyseman, geueth hym the addicion of sighing, or pensiue, whiche in no place ye finde attributed to Paris, or Aiax, or Achilles. But wherfore trow ye dooeth he so? Saue for that Vlisses beynge double, and craftie, vsed Pallas aduyse in all hys procedynges, and was ouerwyse, as he that tooke the fardest drifte he myght from Natures course. Wherfore lyke as amongs mortall men they are fardest remoued from blisfulnesse, that geue theim selues to the studie of wysedome, yea, twyse foolishe in this, that being bozne men, they woulde possiblie yf they could, vsurpe the state of the immortal Gods, and (as poetes feigne the Geantes did) *with their engins of sciences moue warre agaynst Nature*. So they on the other syde seeme leaste miserable, and wretched, who drawe neareste to the bluntnesse of brute beastes, and attempt nothinge beyonde mans degree. For proufe wherof I wyll not blinde you with these Stoikes Syllogismes, but rather induce you by some familiar exemple. And by the fayeth ye owe to the immortall godds, may any thing to an indifferent considerer be deemed more happie, and blisfull, than is this kinde of men, whome commenly ye call *fooles, doltes, ideotes, and pasches?* by most fayre and goodly names as I take theim? Peraduenture I moue a thyng without purpose, and very fonde at the fyrst syght, but ere I haue dooen, ye wyll graunt I haue cause to say it. Seeyng fyrste suche ideotes are free, and exempt from all feare of death, whiche feare is no small corrosiue, to a mind that mindeth it

Naturall fooles the happiest of all men.

deth it

deth it I warrant you. Lyke as they feele not what a twitchyng turment it is, to haue a grudged conscience and thynke as littel at these oldwiues tales of spyrites, of diuill, of hobgoblyne and the fayries, neither mournyng to them selues for feare of euils and aduersities impending, nor braggynge ouermuche vpon hope of any good lucke commyng. To be briefe, they are not fawed, nor pluckt a sunder with a thousande thousand cares, wherwith other men are oppressed. They blushe at nothyng, they doubt nothyng, they coueyte no dignitie, they enuie no mans fortune, they loue not peramours: and lastly if they be verie brute Naturalles, now they sinne not, as doctours doo affirme. Here, I would my *Maisters of sapience*, naye rather *Maister fooles*, shoulde repute with theym selues, how on all sydes they r myndes are vexed continually. Yea lette theym but gather to accompte, to what a noumbre of discommodities, inconueniences, and difficulties the state of they r lyfe is endebted, and so they shall soone summe vp, from howe many, and howe great euill I haue subtraied these my selie pages. Who not onelye them selues are euer mery, playing, singing, and laughynge: but also what euer they doo, are prouokers of others lykewyse to pleasure, sporte, and laughter, as who sayeth, ordeyned herefore by the godd of they r beneuolence, to recreate the sadnesse of mens lyues.

That wheras diuerse amongs thē selues are diuerslye enclined, yet doo all men generally wyth one assente owe fauour to these poore fooles, coueit them, fede thē, stroke them, embrace them, yea so muche lacketh that any wight of reason will do them any great iniurie, as

the verie wildebeaſtes (experience teacheth) haue been ſeen to ſpare and forbeare from hurtyng of theim, tho rough a certayne naturall ſenſe of their innocencie. For ſuche Naturals are holy, and conſecrate vnto the godde, ſpecially to me: and not without cauſe therfore doo folke ſo eſteme theim. Lyke as many great lordes there be, who ſet ſo muche by theim, as ſcant they can eate their meate, or byde a minute without them, cherifſhing theim (by tylle a litle better, than they are wont to doo theſe *frowning philoſophers*. A few of whyche ſort alſo for honours ſake, and furniture of theyr courte, they vouchſaue to entertaine. But why they vſe to make more of the other, I thinke it ſoone geſſed, and ought not to be meruayled at. For theſe wayward wyſemen neuer come foorth but with admonition, and booke leſſons, yea and thorough confidence of their learning, are not ſometyme aſhamed to ſaye the trouth: whereas my fooles ſupplie a farre more gracious and acceptable office, to delite men with theyr playing, dalyinge, fonde talke, and deuiſes. Yea and aboue al this, haue a meruaylous proprietie, in that they onely are playnſayers, and ſouthſpeakers. And what is more laudable (at leaſt as outwardly ye commende it) than playneſſe of ſpeche? For although Alcibiades prouerbe in *Plato aſcribeth trouth to children and dronkennes*, yet may all the prayſe therof be chiefely appended to me, as Eripides can well teſtifie, who wrote thus: *A fooſe ſpeaketh like a fooſe* (id eſt) plainely. For what ſoeuer he hath in his thought, that sheweth he alſo in his countinaunce, and expreſſeth it in hys talke. Whereas theſe wiſemen are they, that ar *double tonged*

Great lordes delite in fooles.

as the

as the aforesayd Euripides telleth vs, with the one of whiche they speake the trueth, with the other, thynges mete for the time and audience. Theyr propertie it is to chaunge blacke into white, and out of one mouth to blow bothe hote and colde: and thynke vnhappelieft in their hartes, whan they spake smotheliest with theyr tounges. Now be it me seemeth that princes, how euer the haboundant felicitie of their estate is wonte to dase meane folkes eyes, maye yet as to this respecte be counted right miserable, because they want, of whome to here the trouthe, and are fayne therefore to take flatterers for their frendes. But some wyll saye, trouth may not at all tymes be spoken, and therfore are these wysemen so eschewed, because without respecte they speake frankely. Now so it is in deede, trueth (for the most parte) is hatefull to princes. And yet we se, that of fooles oftetymes, not onely true tales, but euin open rebukes are with pleasure declared. That what woorde comyng out of a wisemans mouthe were an hanging mattier, the same yet spoken by a foole shall muche delight euin him that is touched therwith. Suche a liuely grace to content men hath veritie, as longe as it be mixed with naught els that may offende. But without office to doue the same the godde haue graunted to fooles onely. And so in a maner vppon lyke causes, haue women lyke pleasure in them, in as much as naturally the Feminine Sexe is bended al to pleasure, and trifles. That what so euer they do with these fooles, although sometyme (may chaunce) it be passe sorte, yet haue they the casse to expounde it to be nothing but a playing toy, or a thing to make daliance

True talke of fooles vnpunished.

Women delite in fooles.

as euer women be redy witted to turne and excuse the mattier. But now to retourne to my purpose, my Ideotes hauyng thus ledde foorth theyr tyme, in muche triumphe, and solace, at last without any feare or sense of death, doo passe hence the right waye to paradyse, there also to disporte theyr quiet and innocent soules in continuall playe. Now goo to if ye list, and conferre any wyseman of theym all, with these my symple, and least regarded fooles, touchynge theyr state of blissfulnesse. Or rather let vs draw on the other syde, for a comparison betwixe theym, the extract of a man of wysedome. For exemples sake, a caityue (so I may call hym) that hath worne out all his childhode, and youthfull yeres in learning of disciplines, hauyng loste so the swetest part of his life in continuall watches, cares, and trauayles, nor in all the residew that euer tasted one dramme of pleasure, being euer niggardly, euer poore, melancholike, and frounynge: as harde and wrongfull to him selfe, as insupportable and odious to others, pale, meigre, sikely, and blere eyed, wasted awaie with elde, and horenes, whiche his owne wyllfull studie auaunced to him before his time: yea and before his tyme postyng (as it were) out of lyfe, although it skilleth not how soone he dieth, who euer yet lyued.

the image of an absolute wyseman.

And this (loe) is that goodly image of theyr wyseman: But ones againe these Philosophers, or verelier (Stoike frogges do crocke at me), *For nothyng (saie thei) is more miserable than madnesse: but a notable folie is next sibbe vnto madnesse, or rather madnesse it selfe. For what is madnesse els, sauyng a generall errour and abusion of the mynde?*

Tusshe, tusshe, these calues are euer in a wronge boxe

but let

but let vs proue yet, by the Muses leaue, how we can refelle this Syllogisme of theyrs, whiche (in deede) thei haue subtilly knitte togethers, but as in Plato, Socrates teacheth vs, *to deuide one venus into two, and one Cupide, into two Cupides*. So lykewyse these Logiciens, if they had doone right, shulde haue deuided or distingued one kynde of madnesse from an other. In as muche as euery madnesse, is not straight therfore miserable. For than Horace woulde not haue saide, *Is it not a swete, and pleasaunt madnesse that deceiueth me?* Nor plato likewise woulde haue put the rauyng of poetes, prophetes, and louers, amonges the principall weales, and benefites of this life Nor yet the prophettesse in virgile would haue called the long wandring, and peregrinacion af Aeneas, a madde labour. But ye must vnderstande, that there be two kyndes of madnesse. One is that rage, whiche the Furies of hell, beyng punisshers of the wicked, doe bringe with them, as often as they graffe, and fasten in the mindes of mortall men, either feruente desyre of an vniuste reuengement, or vnsaciate couetousnesse of golde, or cursed and vnleefull loue, or parent slaughter, or treason, with such other plagues sente by the iust iudgement of the gods, for the punisshyng of misdooers. Or whan those Furies do trouble, and vexe the giltie conscience of a man, with the pricke of dredefull furiousnesse. But there is an other kynde of madnesse, farre vnlike the former, whiche procedeth from me wholy, and most is to be embraced. As often as a certaine pleasant rauyng, or errour of the mynde, deliuereth the herte of that man, whom it possesseth, from all wonted carefulnesse, & rendreth it diuers waies, muche recreated with new delectacion,

Eeueri errour of the mynde is not madnesse.

Two kindes of madnesse.

lectacion. Now this sayde Errour of the mynde, as a speciall iewel, and benefite of the godde, was wyshed after, euin of Cicero him selfe, in a certayne epystle he wrote to Atticus, *to the ende he might haue no sence, nor vnderstanding of so great euils, as at those dayes oppressed his cõtrey.* Lykewyse Argiuus, he whom Horace writeth of, iudged not muche amysse. Who this sarcooyth raued, that whole daies togethers he woulde sitte alone in the Theatre (a place where the commen plaies were played) laughynge, and clappynge his handes, and reioysyng muche to hym selfe, because hym seemed verily that some excellent Tragedies were in playing there wheras in deede he sawe nothinge at all. Whan yet for all that as to other respecte, he behaued hym selfe wysely enough, being welbeloued of his friende, gentill to hys wyfe, and easy to his seruante, without fallyng in any rage with theim, whan he founde a backe faulset set in his wyne vessell. Now whan his kynsfolkes procurement, geuinge him medecines therfore, had healed his disease, and restored hym to his former wittes, marke ye, how he fell out with theym, in blamynge their thankeleese and double diligence. *Ye haue slayne, and not saued me, ô my friendes (quod he) in wrestinge my pleasure from me in this sort, and by force bereuing me such a most delectable errour of my mynde.* And well mought thou say it (good Argiue). For it was they that raued, and had more nede than thou of Elleborus to pourge theym, who toke in hand to driue and expell out of the, so pleasaunt, and happie a madnesse, in stede of a great disease, as they tooke it. Now be it, I am in doubte yet, whether euery Errour of the mynde and senses,

deserueth

deserueth to bee called madnesse. For if one that is sandblynd wouldbe take an asse, for a mopie, or an other praise a rime of Robyn hode, for as excellent a making, as Troylus of Chaucer, yet shoulde they not straightwaies be counted madde therfore. But he that not onely erreth in his sences, but is deceiued also in iudgement of the minde, and that extraordinarely, and of custome, he (I saie) maie well be holden madde, and out of his right minde. As if some man so often as he hearde an asse roze, did perswade hym selfe, he hearde meruailous chauntyng of the Chapell: or a poore cattiue borne of beggers, beleued he were Cresus the ryche kynge of Lidia. And yet, euin this platte kynde of madnesse, so it tende (as for the most part it doeeth) vnto pleasure, than bringeth it no small delectation, as well to theim that are deteyned therwith, as those also that perceiue it to be in others, hauyng theim selues no especte therof. For this maner madnesse is largelier spreade abroode, than most folke wene it is. But in the meane while one mad man mocketh an other, and not seeledome you shal see the more madman, the lowdlier laugh the lesse to scorne. Yet for all that, so muche is eche of them the more happie, the more diuers waies he is deceiued, so in his owne foolishe iudgement, as long as he continueth still in that kind of madnesse, that is peculier to me, whiche surely is so largely deuided, as I doubt whether of the whole multitude of mortall men, ye can pyke me out one onely, who at all tymes may auaunt him selfe to be wiseli, and not to be grudged with some spyce of madnesse. Albeit this is the difference, that who so seeth a Goorde, and beleueth it is

Euery error is not madnesse.

No man voyde of madnesse.

a woman, him doe men geue the name of a madde man because few are accustomed to erre so outtakyngly. But whan we see an husbande take his wyfe, in whom he hath many Coperteners, to bethatter yet than euer was Penelope, muche reioysyng in his good happe, but right happely misstakynge the matter, hym nowe doeth no man cal madde, because that maried men are commenly disposed to suche diseases. Muche after whiche rate do suche folkes also raue pleasantly, as ye ferre hunting before al other passimes, protesting what an incredible pleasure thei conceiue, so often as thei here that foule muske, whiche a horne maketh, being touted in, or the howlyng of a meny of doggs, yea I thynke the verie stenche of the houndes kennell, sendeth muske vnto theyr noses. For as touchynge the death of a deare, or other wilde beast, ye know your selues, what ceremonies thei vse about the same. Euery poore man may cutte out an ore, or a sheepe, where as such venaison mate not be dismembred but of a gentleman: who bareheadded, and set on knees, with a knife prepared properly to that vse, (for euery kynde of knyfe is not allowable) also with certaine lectures, cuttes a sunder certayne partes of the wylde beaste, in a certaine order very circumstantly. Whiche durying, the standers by not speakyng a woorde, behold it solemnly, as if it were some holy Misterie, hauing seen the lyke yet more than a hundred tymes before. Than (sir) whose happe it be to eate parte of the flesshe, mary he thinkes verily to be made therby halfe a gentleman. So therfore whereas these hunters through continuall chasynge and eatyng of theyr venerie, gayne nothyng, but in a maner

Folie of hunters.

doo them selfes also degenerate into wilde and saluage propreties, ye maye see yet, how through thys errour of mine, they repute theyr lyues leadde in more than princely pleasure. And lykewyse, are not they (moste mad lie, but natheles pleasantly occupied, that wholy sette theyr study on buildynge? to set vp, and pluche downe agayne, now square, now rounde, now of thys call, now of that, neuer making ende, till brought at last thereby to extreme pouertie, they haue not so muche left them as a cotage, where to put in theyr heads, nor one crosse of comfort, to bie theim breadde withall. But what therof? forsouth a few yeres haue they spente yet, in great wanhope, and pleasure. Not farre vnlyke these Alcumistes, or multipliers, who by theyr newfound secrete science, go aboute to chaunge metall into metal, serchynge bothe by sea and by lande, a certaine Quintessence. These men are so enticed by an hope they haue to bringe theyr feate to passe, as neyther labour, nor cost may withdrawe theym from the same, but wittie euer they doo deuise some new thinge, wherwith to begyle them selues agayne, till at last, hauyng spent all they coulde make, there remaineth not to them so muche syluer, as wherwith to bie bethen coles for theyr furnace. Natheles they leaue not to dreame still of wonderous pleasant inuencions, encourageyng others as muche as in them lieth, to the same trade of folie. That whan at last all hope forsaketh theym, yet haue they this prouerbe in their mouthes, in steede of a great comforte and recompence, saying, *how in bigbe enterprises, euin the good wyll alone is sufficient*. And than (loe) in theyr excuse, accuse they the shortnesse of mans

Builders.

Multipliers.

life, whiche sufficeth not for the great waight of so depe a cunnyng to be fully serched out. Moreouer these dyseplaiers, though I doubt whether they? madnesse be foolishe, or furious, yet surely it is a foolissh, and ridiculous sight, to beholde many of them so geuen to the plaie, that as soone as they but here ones the sounde of the dyse springyng vpon the boorde, (Lorde) how by and by they? herts beginne to lepe and throbbe in their belies. Further, through a certaine suckling hope of gayne, haupnge made shipwrecke of all they? goode, whan they? shippe strikes vpon the Diserocke, a daunger farre more perillous, than is the race of Britaine) theim selues hardely escappng in they? hose and they? doublet, yet sooner will they begyle they? owne brother, than him that nicked theim of they? money, lest els perchaunce they myght be counted foule gamesters. Yea, and beyng olde nowe, and almost blynde, yet plaie they still with glasen eies: and lastly haupnge they? fyngers so knobbed with the goute, as rendreth them impotent, yet hyre they some other to cast the dise for them. In whiche kinde of madnesse (I wene) thei myght passe they? tymes right pleasantly, if it did not for the most part burst into a rage, and so pertaine rather to the Furies of hell, than to me. But those men (no question) are wholy of my retinew, that put they? sole delyte in tellynge or hearyng of these feigned miracles, or verilier monstrous lies, being neuer satisfied therwith, as whan they feigne certaine terrible tales of gostes, spyrites, fayries, and diuels, with thousande suche other oldwyues inuentions, whiche the further thei sonyde from trueth, are the gladlier beleued, and more

Dise plaiers.

Inuctors of old wyues tales & feigned miracles.

pleasaunt

pleasantly dooe fede mens eares. For surely suche fables are not onely doulcet to passe the tyme withall, but gainfull also to theyr practisers, suche as *pardoners and simittours be.* Than agayne next neyghbours to these are suche as haue a foolysh, but yet a pleasant perswasion to theim selues, that what daie they see a woodden or a peincted image of the giant saynct Christopher, no mischance shall betyde them. Or if thei grete the grauen image of saincte Babara, with some prayer prescribed for that vse, they can not but retourne hurteless from the warres. Or if vpon the sondaies they woorshippe saincte Erasmus, with certaine tapers and Pater nosters, thei shal in short space become rich men. For what speake I of others, who with feigned Perdones, and remissions of sinnes dooe pleasantly flattre theim selues, takyng vpon theim to measure the space and continuaunce of soules abode in Purgatorie, as it were by houreglasses, settyng out, bothe the yeres, the monthes, the daies, the houres, and the lesse minutes, without missyng, as if they had cast it by Algrysme? Or what of those, that vnder confidence of certayne Magike praiers, and charmelyke Rosaries, whiche some deuoute deceiuour inuented fyrste, eyther for his pleasure, or his profite, dooe promise them selues all gladde thyngs, richesse, honour, pleasure, good fare, longe health, lenger lyfe, greene age, yea, and the nexte seate in heauen to god almightie, whiche seate yet by theyr willes they wolde not possesse to timely, I meane that whan the pleasures of thislyfe haue lefte theym muche agaynst theyr willes: yea holdyng theym backe as it were by the teeth, than are thei at last content, to

Perdones

Rosaries.

haue those heauenly toles succede in the others places. And here now I make bringe in the foolysshe wanhope (imagine we) of some vsurer, or man of warre, or corrupte iudge, who casteth foorth one halfepeny of all his euill gotten goodes, will straight thinke that the whole boorde of his former misdyse, is at ones forgeuen him, and that his periuries, his lecheries, his drunkennesses, braulynges, deceites, trumperies, and treasons, whiche infinitely he by all his lyfe committed, are thereby as vpon a Quites est redeemed, yea and so redeemed, as it make be leefull for him, therupon to retourne a freshe to a new worlde of vyces. Further, how foolysshe, nate rather how happie are those good soules: whiche in saying daply the. vii. verses pyked out of the whole Psaltier, beleeue they can not mysse of too too great a good tourne at goddes handes: whiche verses (it is saide) Sainct Bernard learned fyrst of a certayne mery concetted diuell, yet lenger tounged, than craftie, for the poore wretche let Saiuct Bernard begyle hym. But as for the verses, beyng in deede so balde, and nothyng correspondant to the braue title they beare, as welnere I my selfe am ashamed of them, yet are they allowed, not onely of the people, but also of my great presidentes of religion. Moreouer, sauoureth it not of the same sauce (trow ye) whan euerie countrey chalengeth a seuerall sainct for theyr patrone, assignyng further to eche sainct a peculiar cure and office, with also sundrie wates of worshippynge: as, *this sainct helpeth for the tethache: thet socoureth in childbyrth: she restoreth stolne goodes an other aydeth shipmen in tempestes: an other taketh charge of husbandmens hoggs*: and so of the rest; for to longe were it to

Superstitious worshipping of sainctes.

it to reherse all. Than some saincte there be, that are generally sued to for many thynges: amongst whom chiefely is the virgin mother of god: in whom vulgar folke haue an especiall confidence, yea almest more thã in hir sonne. But what is it (I praie you) that men make petition for vnto these saincte? sauyng for thynges pertepning rather to folie, than ought els? Or amongst so many peynted tables, images of ware, and other offrings, wherwith all the walles, and roofes of some pylgrimage chapels are decked, in token of daungers escaped, sawe ye euer any man yet escape folie, or made one heare the wyser? Some one (perchaunce) was saued from drowning, an other striken through with a potgonne recouered: an other whiles bothe partes were together by the eares, no lesse happely, than manfullie, sledde from the battaile an other, beyng hanged on the galowes, through the fauour of some saincte, good maister to the cnes, brake the haulter and ranne his waie, to the ende he myght ones more helpe to discharge suche, as are ouercharged with theyr money bagge: An other, breakynge prison escaped: An other in spite of the phisicion waxed whole of his longe botched sickneſſe: An other, that dranke two sortes of poyson at ones, through the conflict of their contrarie operacions, beynge driuen into a laxe, founde them rather medicinable, than deadly, vnto him, full sore against his wiues will, who lost bothe hir labour and cost about it: An other, when his carte ouertourned, brought his horses home in sauetie: An other being possshed with the fall of an house, lost not (thankes be to the saincte) his lyfe: An other, founde a bedde with a mans wife, had the grace yet to shifte from hir husbande. But none of all these (I warrante you) yeldeth thankes for his folie laide aside. So

Vulgar folke praie not to saincte for wysedome

sweete

sweete a thinge is it, to be cumbred with no wisedome, as men had rather are perdone of an other thyng, than that. But how am I entred thus farre, into this *Sea of supersticions? That if I had an hundred tounges, as many mouthes, and a voyce therto of yron, yet could I neuer descriue halfe the kindes of fooles, nor recken vp halfe the names of their folies.* So swarmeth on all sydes the lyfe of christen men, with this blindnesse: whiche natheles priestes not onely dooe admitte gladly, but also set it forward?, because they knowe well enough on which syde theyr breade is buttred. But now, if some one of these cumbrous wisemen shoulde ryse vp. and saie (and saie truely) *thou shalt neuer die ill, as longe as thou liuest well: Thou redeemest thy synnes, in case to one halfpeny geuen to the poore, thou addest repentance of thy misdeedes, together with teares, praier and fasting: and changest al the trade of thy lyfe: this sainst will helpe the, if thou liuest as he did.* These aduertisementes, and suche semblable, if this wyseman (I saie?) shoulde barke vnto the people: See than straigbt from howe sweete a felicitee, into howe great a trouble and confusion, he shoulde plucke backe the myndes of mortall men. To this college doe they also pertaine, who by theyr liue daies, dooe seriouslye enacte, with what pompe and ordre they woulde be buried. So farfoorth as by tale also they expresse the noumbre of the torches, tapers, mourners, priestes, and orders of friers to synge at theyr funerall?: And than, how many hyred for money must lament and howle for theim. As who saieth, any maner sence of this spectacle shoulde redounde vnto the deade. Or as if they, shoulde blusshe and be ashamed, vnles the corps were

Funerall pompes.

woorship,

woorshipfully enterred, with none other desyre in thys poyncte, than if being made maiors or sheriues they shoulde ordeyne a mydsomer syght. And truely, make I neuer so much haste, yet I cannot passe ouer in sylence those pecockes, whiche in deede are nothinge different from the poorest coblers that clowte shoone, and yet vnder a vaine title of nobilitie doo wondersly stand in theyr owne conceytes. One of theym bringz his petigrew from Aeneas, an other from Brutus, an other from Arthur: They shew the grauen and peyncted armes of theyr auncestours: they speake of theyr *graundfathers, great graundfathers, belgraundfathers, and great belgraundfathers*, wheras they them selues stand lyke blockes, in a maner lesse worth, than those peincted signes, whiche they glorie in. And yet, through this sweete perswasion of Selflyking, they leade a golden lyfe: namely since suche there want not, as very fooles as the other, that haue these kynde of calues in veneracion as if they were goddz. But what speake I nowe of one, or two exemples? as though this Selflykinge made not most mē, manifoldly, by wonderous meanes most happy in theyr owne opinion: as whan one fowler than any marmoset, thinkz hym selfe to be goodlier than Absalon. Or some other, as soone as he can draw three lines with a compasse, takes him selfe to be as good in Geometrie as euer was Euclides. An other *lyke an asse to the harpe*, though he synge no better than a Gynee cocke, weeneth yet to be Hermogenes, that excellent musicien. Than againe, this (no fayle) is a sweete kynde of madnesse, whiche we se in diuers fooles, who what euer qualitie theyr friendes, or ser-

Euery wight lyketh beste him self.

uauntes haue, doo glorie as muche therin, as if they coulde doo it theym selues. Not muche vnlike that wealthie ritheman, whome Seneke writeth of, who talkyng vpon hym to tell a tale, had euer his seruaunt at hand to prompt him where he misse: and being him selfe so feble, as scantly he coulde stande on hys legges, woulde not feare yet vpon confidence of so many poudredbefe lubbers, as he feede at home, to make a matche with any man at footeball. Furthermore I thynke it nedelesse for me, to touche any whit these graduates of artes, and sciences. Seynge that Selflouc is altogethers so muche theyr alie, as any of theym wyll sooner be driuen from the enheritance his father left him than geue place in cunning to any others: but chiefely these *Synging men*, *Sophisters*, *Rhetoriciens*, *and poetes* doo excell therin: amongst whome, the vncunnynger, the more lyketh hym selfe, and the frankyer boasteth what he can doo. And *lyke lettuce, like lippes*: for the balder the thing be, the more are mē wont to be in loue with it: as commenly the woorst thynges are best fantesied, because (as afore I sayed) the most parte of men are subiecte vnto Folie. And therfore, if so be that a man the vncunninger he is, the deeper yet standeth in his owne conceyte, and is of moste men the more accepted, now I see not to what entente she shoulde rather coueite the true and perfite knowlage of the thynge that he professeth, whiche syll shoulde coste him longe labour and expence before he atteine it, and being ones had, should make him the lesse vnderstanded, the more fearefull to misse in hitting of it, and lastly commended of a farre fewer noumbre, because most mēs rudenesse can

Graduates of artes.

neſſe can not reche to the fines of the ſame. Moreouer, wee ſee how nature as in ſingular men, ſo alſo in eche Nacion, and almoſt in eche citie, hath graffed a certain commen ſelfliknynge. And ſo it commes to paſſe, that Engliſſhemen peculierly before all other thinges, doo vindicate vnto theim faire ſhape of the bodie, muſike, and well farſed tables. Scottes, doo bofte theim ſelues in theyr nobilitie, and nereneſſe of bloudde to their prince, not a little alſo flattring theym ſelues in theyr Duns doctrine. Frenchemen, wouldo be counted cyuile, and curteys of maners. Pariſiens, all other names ſet a ſide, deſire yet that the ſcience of Theologie be peculierly annexed to theyr vniuerſitie. Italians, a boue all men counte them ſelues learned in humanitie and eloqence, chiefly gloryynge in this, that a monges all other nations, they be not Barbarous. In whyche kynde of felicitie the Romains are principall, who euin yet, dreame pleaſauntly of the triumphes of theyr olde Rome. Venecians, put great confidence in theyr nobilitie. Grekes, as authours of all ſciences, doo magnifie them ſelues in ſo many famous men, as whi lom flouriſhed in theyr countrey. Turkes, and all that frothe of the bery Barbariens, wouldo be commended yet euin for their religion, laughinge chriſtien men to ſcorne, as rather full of ſuperſtitions. But much more ſweetely are the Ievves deceyued, who conſtantly loke yet after theyr Meſſias, and euin till this daye ſtande obſtynately by thyr Moyſes law. Hiſpanierdes, wolde be taken for good men of warre. Allemaignes doo ſaune vpon theym ſelues for their talneſſe, and knowlage in artmagike. Thus, as it were to longe to

The commen ſelfliknyng of eche Nacion.

repete all, so you see (I trow) howe muche this arrogance of Selfloue doeth delite all men, in all places. With whom in a maner hir suster Adulacion may compare. For Selfloue is naught els, but whan a man fauneth on hym selfe. Whiche yf thou doest to an other, than is it Adulacion, or flaterie. But now a dayes Flaterie (on gods name) is taken for a vile fault, but of suche as are moued rather with the name, than with the thing it selfe. They thinke how saieth, may cupll toygne with flaterie, whiche to be otherwyse, we may learne through the exemple of brute beastes. For what can be more faunynge, and flattrynge to a man, than a dogge? but than agayne, what is more faythfull? what is fuller of dallance than a squyrell? but than agayne what is lesse hurtfull? Unlesse perchaunce ye will saie, that Lyons, Tygres, or Leoperdes are meter for mans recreacion. Now be it there is in deede a certaine kinde of flaterie, wherby some traytours and deceitfull villaines, doo trayne simple folkes oftentymes to their vndoynge. But this Adulacion of myne procedeth wholy from a certayne gentilnesse, and easy whitenesse (as it were) of a friendly good will, and draweth muche nearer to a vertue, than doeth hir contrarie, that is to say, a *roughe plainesse, or vnmanerly crabbednesse, to beare with no man.* This Adulacion encourageth a weake spirite, comforteth one drouppng in sadnesse, quickeneth a langwishyng thought, wakeneth a dulle head, reiseth vp a sicke minde, mollifieth a stubbourne hert, getteth loue, and ones gotten, retayneth it styll, entiseth children with a good will to lerne their bokes, gladdeth olde folkes, teacheth, and admonisheth

Flaterie a most requisite and commodious thyng to mans conuersation.

princz of theyr duitiees, vnder coulour of prayse, without offendyng, briefly, it maketh that eche man to hym selfe is bothe dearer, and more acceptable: whiche effect may well be taken for the chiefest membre of felicitie. And what can be more faunyng, than whan one man prayseth an other? *lyke moyles clawing eche others backe?* Or what needeth me to alleage vnto you, howe thys flatterie supplieth a great good porcion of that famous Eloquence, greater percel of Phisike, & greatest of Poetrie? at ones, that she is euin the very hony, and conserue of mans societie and companyiug togethers? But Philosophers saie *it is a miserable thinge to be begyled, and erre so.* Naie, most myserable is it (I saye) not to erre, and not to be deceyued. For too too are they deceiued, who wene that mans felicitie consisteth in thinges selfe, and not rather in the opinion how the same are taken. *In as muche as in all humaine thinges, there is so great darkenesse and diuersnesse, as nothing may be clerelye knowne out, nor discouered:* lyke as truly was affirmed by my Academicall philosophers, the least arrogant amonges all theyr Sectes. Or yf that ought may be knowen, the same yet not seldome disauayleth to the gladsomenesse and pleasure of the lyfe. Lastly, so is mans mynde framed, as muche more it deliteth in thinges to the shew, than in suche as are in deede. Whereof who so list to haue a liuely prouffe, let hym no more but goo to a sermon, wherin if ought be sayd grauelye, and to the mattier, he shal see strayght all the audience other slepe, or gaspe, or be vrkesome. But and yf the skreker (the preacher I woulde haue sayde) falleth out of his purpose, as commonly their vsage is, into some

Mans life dependeth vpon oppynions of thinges.

 tale of

tale of Gesta Romanorū, or suche lyke, than by and by they lift vp their heades, they stande vp, and geue good eare. Also if any sayncte amongst other, semeth ratheste to be newfounde or poeticall, admitte it be sayncte Bridon, saincte Christophye, or saincte Barbara, the same yet shall ye see more deuoutly worshipped, and bowed to of the people, than Peter, or Paule, yea or Christ hym selfe. But these matters perteyne not to thys place. Consider you therfore, how muche lesse costeth the acquirey of this felicitie, whiche dependeth on the semblance and opinion of a thing, as if it were had, than that other of the thynge selfe, beinge had in deed, whiche be it of neuer so small value and estimacion, as Grammer, yet you see how longe a man must swete ere he gette it, wheras the semblaunce of the same ye may easelie conceiue, and come by, through your own perswasion: and yet shall that conceypte as muche, or more auayle you towardes felicitie. For admitte that one eateth stinking saltfishe, wherof some other could scant byde the smelle, and yet to his mouthe it tasteth sweetee than a partrich, now (I pray you) what difference is there, as touchynge the felicitie he taketh therin? Or an other abhorred to eate of a Carpe, some other delicate kynde of fisshe, did that any thinge hynder the blissfull state of his life? If a man hath a wyfe as vglie as may be, who yet in his conceipt may compare in beautie with Venus, is it not all one nowe vnto hym, as if she were fayre in deede? If he that beholdeth a table daubed with a little durte and redde Dre, did perswade hym selfe it were a pece of Apelles or Hans Holbins peincting, is he not happier (trow ye) than

ye) than some other, who at greate price haue bought some of those woorkmens woorke: and peraduenture take lesse pleasure in regardyng of the same, than he dooeth of hys: I know a gentilman, that presented his new wedded wife with certayne counterfeict stones set in ringe, perswading hir (as he could doo finely enough) that not onely they were true, and orient, but also of greate value. Now I pray you, what skylled that to hir? Seynge she contented bothe hir eyes and fantesie with those counterfeict, keping theim for a great treasure, whereas the husbande in the meane season bothe spared cost, and tooke pleasure at his wyues errour, who natheles conned him a greate thanke, as if they had been ryght iewels. *Is there any difference (trow ye) betwene suche as Plato feigneth sittinge in a caue vnder the grounde, to se nothing but shadowes and representacions of thinges, so that they doo reiecte nought els, and content theim selues therwith, and that wiseman, he imagineth should come out of the caue, and so see very thinges as they are in deede?* That and if Micillus in Lucians dialogues had euermore dreamed that his golden & riche dreame, than needed he not to haue wisshed for any other felicitie. Conclude therfore, that no difference is betwene a thinge it selfe, and the opinion or semblaunce of the same: or if there be, than are my fooles yet in the happier trade. First because their felicitie costeth theym as little as can be, as onely an easy perswasion and beleefe that they haue, or can doo a thynge. Merte than, for that they enioye their felicitie in commen with many other, and pardie ye knowe, howe vnpleasaunt the possession of any weale is, without felowship, as yf a

man

man dwelled without company in the fayrest platte of the whole earth. Wherunto I may lyken these wyse men. For who is he that knoweth not how scarce they are to fynde, in case ye fynde any at all? In deede the Grekes in so many hundred yeres coulde pyke out but seuin of theym: and yet if ye syphte those well, I reny my selfe, and ye finde one halfe, yea or the thyrde parte of a wyseman among? theim all. Therefore if amonges many commodities which my cosyn Bacchus doth endue you with, thys (and woorthily) is reputed the chiefest, *that through drunkennesse he wypeth all cares, and anxietees from the mynde, but for a seasone onely,* (for as sone as one hath slept a while vpon his drinke, and tempred so his braynes, than returne *in post haste* his former troubles and veracions.) Drunkennesse.

Folye a continuall drunkennesse.

Now farre more ample, and redie than is my benefite of Folie vnto you? whan thorough a continuall drunkennesse (as it were) I replenishe your mynd?, with muche ioye, delite, and pleasure yea and that so easelie brought about? Whiche benefite of myne I doo distribute to all men, wheras other Good? giftes are derined sundrely vpon sundrye men. Bardie, these noble and fine wiues that are hable to resolue sadnesse, and make men pluche vp theyr stomakes, doo not growe in euerie place. Few haue the gyfte of beautie through Venus fauour. Fewer haue eloquence at Mercuries hand?. Hercules maketh not all men rythe. Iupiter graunteth not kyngdomes to euery bodye. Oftentymes Mars fauoureth neither partie. Many returne discomforted from Apollos oracle. Not seeldome Ioues thunder destroieth men: and Phebus launceth hys arowes of plage amonges

you.

pou. Neptunus drowneth more folke than he saueth (for what shoulde I speake of these, Veioues, Plutones, Ates, Peynes, Feuers, and suche other, not goddes, but rather helhounds and tourmentors vnto you.) But I folie am she, that egally dooe comprehende all men vnder the compasse of my so great a good gifte. And loke not yet to be praide vnto, nor am not angrie, nor seeke amende, whan any parte of my sacrifice is misdoone, or ouerslipped. Nor I mingle not heauen and earth together, if any one biddyng the other Godde to a sacrifice banket, leaueth me onely behind, and alloweth me not my portion of the smoke, and sauour of the burnt offringe. For of the other Godde in this poinct such is the morositee and ceremoniousnesse, as in a maner it is easier, yea and lesse peril for a man to let them alone, than to meddle with theyr rites, and obseruaunce. Lyke as some men there bee, so waywarde of nature, and so testiue, as better it were not to vse theyr company, than to claime any acquaintance of them. *But no man (saie they) maketh sacrifice vnto folie, nor buildeth hir a temple.* Now surely I meruaile not a little, (as afore I saide) at suche ingratitude of men. But yet of my gentilnesse I take this also in good part. Albeit to say the trouth I synde no want therof at all. For why shoulde I require, *either frankensence, or leauained meale, or a gote, or a hogge* for my sacrifice? Whereas all mortall men, in euery region, doe yelde me that worshipping, whiche euen by these scripturedoctours is wonte to be moste approued? Unlesse perchaunce I shoulde enuie Diana, because hir altars are besprēt with mans blood. Nate, I thinke my selfe to be than moste amplie, and

Folies power embraceth al mē.

religiously worshipped, whan euery where, all men beare me (as they doe) in their hertz, expresse me in their maners, and represent me in their liuing. Whiche kynde of worshippinge is not very ryfe, no not among Christians. For what a noumbre of theim see we, to set tapers afore the virgin mother of God: and that at noone dates whan lest nede is? But than againe, how few of theim goe about to folow hir steppes either in chastnesse of lyfe, sobrenesse of maners, or loue of heauenly thynges? For so shulde sainctes moste dignely be worshipped. Moreouer, why shoulde I fynd lacke of a temple, seeyng all this worlde is in maner of a temple moste goodly (as I take it) vnto me? And as for preestes of my law, and other ministers of my religion, I am sure I want none in any place, wheras men want not. Than I am not altogether so foolishe, to demaunde any grauen or peincted images representyng me, whiche rather should derogate than aduance myne honour. wheras oftentimes I see many dolts, and fatheddes worshippe suche stocks, in stede of the sainctes themselues, wherby I might chance to bee serued, as they that are thruste out of their roumes, by their deputies. But I take it, that so many imagis are erected in my name, as there be lyuyng men, bearyng the lyuely representacion and image of me about theim, will they, or will they not. Wherfore, I haue no cause to be agreued with the other Goddes, though they be worshipped sundrely, in sundrie partes of the earth: and that at tymes of the yere prefixed. As Phebus in the Ile of Rhodes, Venus in Cypres, Iuno at Argos, Minerua at Athenes, Iupiter in Olimpus, Nep-

How men woorship Folie,

All the worlde a temple to Folie.

Grauen & peincted images.

Neptunus at Tarentum: and Priapus at Lampsacum wheras all the worlde vniversally offreth me daie by daie farre dearer, and more digne sacrifics, than theirs are. That and if I seme to some folk?, to haue spoken these woord? more stoutly, than truly, goe to, let as but view a little, and consider the veraie lyues, and doyng? of men, and it shall manifestly appeare, howe muche they are endebted vnto me, and how much I am made of, both of heigh and lowe degrees. Yet I entend not to accoumpt euery mans life, for that were an endlesse labour, but a certaine onely of the moste notable, wherby ye may easily gesse, what the rest are. For what nede I to allege vulgar people? who altogethers (without any question) apertayne to my bande? So many veines of Folie they abounde in, and so many new mynes they dooe freshe and fresshe seke out, as a thousand suche as Democritus was, shoulde not suffice to laughe at them, although yet those verie laughters had nede of an other Democritus to laugh them also to scorne. Yea, and it passeth, to see what sporte and passetyme the Godds them selues haue, at suche Folie of these selie mortall men. For as for the forenoone, and sobre houres of the daie, those the Godds spende in counsaile mattiers, and hearyng of mens vowes, and supplicatious, But after diner ones, whan they haue drunken merilie of theyr Nectar, and list not to treate on ernest affayres, than whiche syde of heauen bendeth most toward? the earth, there sitte they, and intentiuely beholde what mortall men dooe: and surely no spectacle can be more pleasaunt vnto them. Good lord, what a Theatre is this worlde? how many, and diuers

The common life of men ful of Folie.

Howe the Gods out of heauen beholde mēs folies in earth.

 are

are the pageantes that fooles plaies therin? For I also not seeldome am wont to sitte amonges the Godds to marke mens dooyngs. One man see they redie to die for loue of a woman, and the lesse he is beloued, the more hotely to pursue hir. An other marieth the goods, not the wydow. He sett his wife to sale. An other ielous wretche lyke Argus, kepeth his in mewe.

This man mourneth, and lorde, what folies saieth he, and dooeth he, hyrynge also some plaiers (as it were) to wepe and howle for the nones. An other, what so euer he can rape and rende, slingeth it into his bealy gutte, whan not longe after he woulde gladly skamble for a pece of biskette. An other putt all his delite in slepe, and slouth. There be some suche also, as busie them selues busely in other mens businesse, not loking ones how theyr owne gothe. Some coupmt theim selues riche men, *in borowing of Peter to clothe Poule*, whan soone after they fynde not one fardyng left, wherwith to blisse them. An otherthinks nothyng better, than liuyng hym selfe wretchedly, to make John his sonne riche. This man for a little lucre, and that also incertayne, skymmeth all the seas, committyng his life to the waues and the wyndes, whiche no money maie restore to hym, ones beyng forlorne. He had rather seke him riches in the warres, than slepe in a whole skynne at home. There be some, that in pliyng, and geuing attendaunce on olde men childerlesse, wene to become riche through executourship. Suche want not also, that in wowyng of these wealthy olde trots, thynke to speede sooner of their purpose. Either of whiche than surely make most pastyme to the Godds theyr beholders,

holders, whan of those that they goe about to traine, they also are trained, and bayted with crafte for crafte, But aboue all others, vsurers are a kynd of men most foolysshe and filthy whose trade and occupacion beeyng in deede the vilest that can be, and therto handled by them after as vyle a maner, with lyng, forswearing bribing, begglyng, and shiftyng, yet coumpt they them selues to bee head men of their parishes, because they weare hoopes, and goldryngs on theyr fyngers, And no meruaile, whan these blynd minions, these friers, can so faunyngly vpholde them in their sermons to the people, callyng theim worshipfull, and veneraude maisters, in hope that some portion of those euill gotten goods, maie somewhat in compensacion of theyr golden glosyng, fall vnto theyr couent. Yeu shall see agayne some others so much geuen to Pythagoras secte, (who *would haue all thynges amonges friendes to be in common*) that what so euer they fynde lyng at large, with as free a conscience they will take it, as if it came to them by inheritaunce. There be some also, who ouely with wishyng and wouldynge are riche in theyr owne fantesie, as whan they imagine certaine sweete dreames of glaade thynges to befall theim, whiche they take sufficient for theyr whole felicitee. Many reioyse to bee holden richmen abrode, liuing at home with an Dreng, or an Dynion. This shapethrifte, throweth his goods against the walles. That penny father, shrapeth it togethers, bothe by God, and by the diuell, Ye, is driuen through ambicion, to seeke fauour at him, and him. Ye, is no medlar, but sitt by his owne fyre at home. Many fooles, tangle theim selues in the lawe,

Vsurers.

and can neuer gette out of it, but holde and shoue on bothe sydes, onely to make satte these adiouruynge iudges, and Ambidexter Aduocates. This man loketh for a newe worlde. That man compasseth some depe drifte in his head. Some one hath an especiall deuocion to goe to Ierusalem, to Rome, or to sayncte *James in Galice*, leuynge his wyfe and childzen succourlesse in the meane, while at home. Briefly, if one (as Menippus did) lokyng out at the moone, beholde from thence the innumerable tumultes, and businesses of mortall men, he shoulde thinke verily he sawe a meny *of flies, or gnattes, brawlyng, fightyng, begilyng, robbyng, plaiyng, sinyng wantonly, borne, bredde vp, decaiyng, and dyyng*: So that, it is scant beleuable, what commotions, and what Tragedies, are stirred vp, by so little, and so short liued a vermyn as this man is. For sometimes a small storme of warre, or pestilence, swopeth awaie and dispatcheth many thousandes of theim togethers, But I were plainely mosse foole of all, and woorthy whom Democritus, with many laughters shuld poinct to scorne, if I toke vpon me to tell vppe all the sortes of vulgar peoples folie and madnesse: and not rather tourne me to those, who among you, haue a certaine reputacion of wisedome. Suche as compasse no meane thinges, but aspire euer to a certaine preeminence in knowlage and cunnyng aboue others. Amonges whom Gramarians and scholemasters seme to be right notable. A kinde of men (doubtlesse) most miserable, not slauelyke, and most contemptuous, vnlesse I did mitigate and releue the discommodities of theyr most wretched possession, with a certayne swete bayte

Mortall men compared to a meny of flies.

The folie of these that are com... of the wyser sorte.

Gramarians.

of

of madnes. For surely these Grammer teachers are not pestred with one, or two euils, but rather with centum grauamina. As who euer in their scholes, their scholes, saide I: nay rather in their *Chapiter houses, session places, or bucheries*, beyng alwaies barehungrie, & slouenly, do walk theim selues awaie with continuall trauailes among a meny of boyes, waxe death with noyse and crieyng, kyll theim selues with stenche and filthinesse. And yet through my benefyte, they coumpt no men like theim selues. So lordely a thynge they take it, whan thei feare their fearful flocke, with a threteninge boyce and countenannce. So princely an execution, to feare the poore boyes arses with roddes, and ferules, playeyng the tourmentours, and termagants among them, muche lyke *the asse wrapped in a lyons skinne*. But yet, whiles they are thus occupied, that their filthinesse semeth more than cleannesse vnto theim, that stenche, and fislynke, smelleth ambre greise, that bondage of bondages is taken by theim for a kingdome: So farfurth as they would not chaunge their tyrannische estate, neither with Phalaris nor Dionysius. But farre more blissfull yet bee they, through a certaine conceipt they haue taken of a newe trade in teachyng, eche therin folowyng his owne deuise. That wheras they put in to childrens heades, naught but mere trifles, and fonde rules of their owne, yet (Lorde) what Palæmon, or what Donate will not they dispise, in regarde of theim selues. But (thanked be God) they fynde the meanes yet, by what crafte I cannot tell, to make the foolisshe mothers, and ignoraunt fathers beleue, that they are suche in deede, as they bolde them selues to be.

Adde

Adde also hereunto, this kynde of delite they haue, as often as any of theim chaunceth in some olde boke to fynde out the name of Anchises mother, or some other latine woorde not commenly vsed, as Bubsequa, Bouinator, Manticulator, or diggeth vp some gobbet of an olde stone grauen with Romaine or greke letters somwhat defaced, (Lorde) than what exultacion, what triumphes, what commendacions make they of it? as if they had wonne all Afrike, or taken the great citee of Babylon. What thynke you also, that they sette vp and shew abrode theyr verses? verses (god knoweth) moste balde, and foolyshe, but neuer the more sayle they of some as verie asses as they, who will hieghly commende the same: Whiche putteth theim in suche a flusshe, as plainely they beleeue they haue recouered Virgiles owne vayne in poetrie. But this is the sweetest poincte of all, to see them flatter, and praise eche other, clawynge them selues by courses. That and if (as is possible enough) it chanceth one of them to stumble at some woorde, and an other beyng more aduised than he to take hym with the maner, (Oh Hercules) what Tragedies, what Disputacions, what Inuectiues are tossed than and retossed betwixte theim? Let neuer grammarian be my friende, if I lie ought herein I know a certaine learned man, beyng bothe *a Grecian, and a Latinist, a Geometricien, a philosopher, and a phisicien*, ye a kyngs phisition, now almost .lx. peres olde, who setynge all other thyngs a parte, hath whole twentie peres togethers, gone about the makyng of a new Grammer: esteemyng hym selfe right happie, if he maie yet liue so longe, as to sette a perfite rule and distinction betwene

betweene the eight partes of speche: whiche hitherto none of the Greke, nor Latine grammarians could fully bringe to passe: As who saieth, it were deadly sinne, if one make a Coniunction a distinction perteining to the nature of Aduerbes. And for this cause, thoughe alreadye there be as many Grammers, as Grammer-teachers, nay moe, for my friende Aldus alone hath more thā fiue times set out a grāmer, yet ouerslippeth he no grammerboke, be it neuer so tedious, and barbarously written, whiche he loketh not ouer, and sercheth throughly, enuying any man that in this kynde shoulde goo one ace beyond hym, as if he feared lest some other might take the glorie hereof from him, and so his twentie yeares labours shulde be spent in vayne. Now whether call you this a madnesse, or a Folie? For as to me it skilleth not, so ye confesse it to procede all of my goodnesse, that these poore wightes, these Grammarians, and Scholemaisters, who els shuld be as wretched as wretchednesse it selfe, wene yet they are mounted into such a felicitie, as gladly they would not chaunge lyues, nor estates, no not with the riche kinges of Persia. Poetes are somewhat lesse beholding vnto me, not withstādyng, euin by theyr confession they shew them selues to be of my secte, a free kynde of men, that lyke peincters may feigne what they list, whose study tendeth naught els, than to fede fooles eares with mere trifles and foolisshe fables. And yet it is a wonderous thyng to see, how through fame therof, thei weene to be made immortall, and Gods peres, promisynge others also lyke immortalitie therby. To this order more than to any other, both Selfloue, and Adulacion are annexed familiarly

Poetes.

Rhetoriciens.

militarly, and of no kynde of men am I obserued more plainly, nor more constantly. Moreouer Oratours and Rhetoriciens, notwithstanding that a littell they seme to swarue from me, cleuyng to the philosophers, yet I can proue theim also to be of my faction, as well by other argumentes, as by this, that in the preceptes of theyr arte, amonges diuers other trifles, they haue written so largely and exactly, *how to prouoke laughter in an audience, and of the cast, or meanes of sceffinge*: So far forthe as he what so euer he was, that wrote the booke of Rhetorike to Herennius, *maketh folie also to be a membre and parcell of Rhetorike*. And Quintilian, the very head man of this ordre, in his booke of the *institucion of an Orator* hath made one chaptre all of laughter sterynge, lenger I wene then is Homers Iliade. Yea, so muche dooe Rhetoriciens attribute to foolisshenes, as oftentimes what abiection by no argumēt may be repelled, the same yet with some laughyng and scoffynge conceitt, thei wolde haue shifted of. Vnlesse perchance ye will saie, that folie hath naught to doe therin, whan with such taunt and mery tourned answers, thei prouoke men to laughter, yea and that by rules and preceptes geuen thereof for the nones. Of this grape are suche also as in makynge and publisshinge of new bookes, do sisshe for a praise and glorie. These men as generally they are muche bounden vnto me, so in especiall are suche of theim, as dooe blotte theyr papers with mereli trifles. For as for those that take vppon theim to write cunnyngly to the iudgement of a fewe, and care not what learned men loke vpon their doingt, theim take I to be rather miserable, than blissfull, se-

compilers of new bookes.

ing how continually they are fayne to writhe their wit tes in and out, in puttyng to, in chaunging, in blottinge out, in laying theyr woorke asyde, in oueruewinge it a- gaine, in shewing it to some for a prouffe, and yet kee- ping it in theyr hands whole nine yeres togethers, so that they are neuer satisfied with them selues, whiles they go about to purchase so vayne a reward as praise is, yea and that geuin theim by a few, onely so dearely bought with many nightz labors, and losse of slepe, the sweetest thinge that can be, and with so many trauay- les, and beating of theyr braynes about it: besides the hurt thei susteyn in theyr bodies, decay of beautie mar ryng of their eyesight, or also blindnesse, together with pouertie, enuie, forbearing of pleasures, vntimely age hasted death, and suche like disaduauntages, which na- theles these wisemen sticke not at, so they maye haue theyr writingz allowed at one or two of these blereied bokewormes handz. But my Scribes on the other side, haue not a litle more commoditie and pleasure of their folie. Wheras taking no greate leysure in penninge of theyr mattier, naie rather what so euer toy lighteth in their head, or falleth in their thought, be it but theyr dreame, they do put the same straight in writing, with small dispence or none, sauyng waste of paper? know- yng (I warrant you) what wyll come of it, that the fon- der the trifles be, whiche they entreate of, the more cō- mendacion shall they get of most men, fooles as they ⁊ vnlearned. And what maistrie is for theim to set lyght store by two or three of those learned mens repriues, yf so be yet they rede theyr woorkes? Or what auay- leth theim, so few wysemens allowaunce? where so

great a multitude of fooles on the other syde wyll disalow it. That in case they haue the feate to set furth other mens doing? for theyr owne, and can be contented to beare the name of that, whiche others tooke the peynes about, marie sir than I thinke they haue good skille: for though it chaunce them at laste to be taken with the maner, yet for a season they maye kepe theyr reputacion. And it is a pleasure to marke how much these men esteeme them selues, whan they are praysed so of the people, and whan they are poincted oute in a great company, as, *this is the wonderous felow ye here of*: and whan in euery bokebynders shoppe theyr woorkes are set to the sale, and whan they rede theyr *names surnames*, and *bynames*, set in the fyrst frunt? of euery boke, whiche titles also they dooe counterfeicte, and tourne into some contrarie language, as strange as mai be deuised. Yet, I praye you, whan all is dooen, what be they els but names? and how few shall know those names, hauing regard to the world? wydenesse? and how many lesse commende theim? namely suche diuersitie being in iudgement?: yea among? vnlearned men also? But what saye you to this, that not seeldome they feygue those names, or borow theim out of olde Autours? for one of them ioyeth to be named Telemachus, an other Stelenus, or Laettes, he Policrates, he Thrasymachus, and suche lyke. So that now it skylleth not how they entitle theyr bookes, for by as good reason myght they call it *a goorde*, or *a radisshe roote*, or name it A, or B, as philosophers dooe by theyrs. But this is the best sporte of all, to see theim presente eche others with *epistles, with verses, and with mattiers of praise*

sent

sente from fooles, to fooles: and from asses, to asses. Here, he in his iudgement is as good a Poete as Alcæus was, and hym doeth he likewyse compare to Callimachus. The one is holden for more eloquent then Tullius Cicero: that other, for better learned than Plato: Yea and not seldome leuyng this fayre play, they fall to foule, in sekynge theim out some aduersaries, to the ende that in contendyng togethers, they? fame male be the wyder blowne abrode. In the meane tyme, one learned man taketh his parte, another taketh his, till at last bothe the Capitaines hauinge buckled manfully togethers, woulde be taken for Victours, and both part? pretende to Triumph therfore. These thinges of wisedom are counted to be mere folies, as in deede thei are, who can denie it? But yet these while through my benefite they lede a pleasaunt and glorious lyfe, as not willinge to chaunge their Triumphes, shortely (I beleue) with those of the Scipions. Now be it, suche as are learned in deede, are not a little also beholdynge vnto me, whiles with great pleasure they male laugh at the other, and take fruicion of they? madnesse, whiche they can not againe saie, vnlesse they be to vnkinde, and the veriest chorles of all. Next these now, Ciuilians, and Canonistes chalenge no meane place among? learned men. And who than they stande deper lier in Selfelikynge? For while continually they tourne, and retourne Sisiphus stone in reherlyng vp an hundred Lawes and Paragraphes al with a breath, it skilleth not howe little to purpose, and whiles they adde glose vpon glose, and opinions vpon opinions, they make as though they? law science were most hard, and

The foolishe contention amonges learned me.

Lawiers of Ciuile and canon

difficult to be atteined to. So what so euer is hardlye dooen, that they recken straight to be nuost excellent.

Logiciens And ioigne we (hardily) to them these Sophistrers and Logiciens, being a race of men *more kacling than a menie of dawes*: eche of whome in bablyng maye compare with ten women chosen for the nones, and farre more happie shoulde be, in case thei were onely bablers, and not skold? also: in sorte that oftentymes for *the moone shyne in the water*, they striue whole daies together, and with to muche arguinge, let the trewthe of the mattier slippe by theim. Natheless through Selfliking they are bathed all in felicitee, so that armed onely with *thre Sillogismes*, thei dare boldely prouoke any man, as wel assured that thei wil neuer geue ouer, though Stentor hym selfe were matched against theim. Nexte

Philosophers. theim come these Philosophers, venerable for theyr longe beard?, and clokes downe to the feete, protesting theim selues onely to haue knowlage and wisedome, where as other men stand for no more than Ciphres in Algorisme. But (lorde) how sweetely do thei raue in their owne opinion: whan constauntely thei affirme there be worldes innumerable? Or whan thei take vpon theim to measure the sonne, the moone, the planetes and their compasses, as it were by *ynchemeale*, or *drawne with a lyne*: Or whan thei expounde the causes of thunder, of wyndes, of eclipses, and suche other inexplicable thing?, nothinge doubtynge, as if they had crepte into natures bosome, or were of counsaile with the Godd?. And yet dooeth nature lowdely laughe theim to scorne, with all their coniectures: coniectures I saie, and no certaine knowlage, whiche appereth by

this,

this, that one secte of theim agreeth not with an other, but rather contendeth togethers vpon euery litle thing And yet these men, who in dede know nothing, will take vpon them to know all thing. Yea wheras thei knowe not theim selues, nor see not oftentymes a pitte, or a stone lyinge in their waie, either for pouerblindnesse, or because their witte is not at home, yet make thei their auaunt to see and perceiue plainely their Idees, their *Vniuersals, formes separate, fyrst mattiers, quidditees.* and *Ecceites*, thynges so subtile, and so fine, as not Lynceus hym selfe could espie theim out, though it be said how he could see through a stone walle. But than chiefely doe these Philosophers disdeigne other vulgar people, as often as with triquetre, and tetragon circles, or with suche lyke Mathematical figures, drawne one vpon an other, and entangled in maner of a mase, with letters also set as it were in order of battaile, and with lines drawne hither and thither, they dooe calle a mist before simple folkes eies. And suche there want not also of this kynde of men, that take vppon theim by lokyng on the sterres, and planetes, to tell vs aforehand, what shall happen and betide a hundred yeres after. Declaryng by their Prognosticacious, the successe of certeine wonderous accidents, straunger then any wytchecrafte, or artmagike. Yet suche is their happe, to fynde out men, who of their singular grosnesse geue credence also to this their so plaine illusion. Nowe hauing reached thus farre, and comen to the place of *doctours of diuinitie*, I stande in doubte whether I maie speake of theim, or rather passe theim ouer, and not spurne at all their patience, beinge a nette of men so crabbed

Astronomers.

Doctours of diuinitie.

crabbed and waspelike, lest els perchaunce they shoulde all at ones fall vpon me with fyre hundred conclusions dryuyng me to recant, that in case I refused so to doo, than wolde thei by and by denounce me for an heretike For that is the thunderbolt, wherwithall they threten suche, as stande not best in theyr fauour. But surely although none other sorte of men doo with lesse good wyll than these, acknowlage my goodnesse vnto theim. Yet can I proue these Doctours also to be more than one or two wayes in my daunger, being so propped vp with theyr owne Arrogance and Selflikinge, as if thei dwelled among the starres, or loked downe from aloft and in a maner take compassion vpon other seely men lyke wourmes creepynge by the grounde. Namely whiles they are hedged in on al sides, with suche agard of Magistral diffinicions, conclusions, corollaries, explicite and implicite propositions, with so many startyng holes, as not Vulcanes nettes were hable so fastly to holde them, but they wolde wynde theim selues out againe with Distinctions, wherwith thei carue al knottes asunder, as smothely as a rasour doeth the heares of a mans beard. Suche a noumbre of newfounde monstrous termes haue they thicke and threefolde inuented. Also whiles they expounde the secrettes of scripture at theyr pleasure, disputinge *how the worlde was first create, and proporcioned, by what chanels sinne was derined into Adams posteritie, what wayes, by what measure, and in how short space Christ was complete in the wõbe of Mary the Virgin: And how in the sacrament of the aultare, the accidentes of breade and wyne, remayne whan the substance is goe* but these questions are for euerie ponge beginner. Other

The foolysshe questions of whole doctours.

ther haue thei moze mete for great and illuminate doctours, whiche if at any tyme in disputacions oz talkyng after diner they doe stumble vpon, straight they shake of their slepie noddyng, and doe rowse theim selfe. As, whether any instant was in the generacion of god the seconde person? whether in Christ there be more filiacions than one? whether this propolicion be possible? God the father, hateth the sonne, oz whether Christ might possible haue taken to him the likenesse of a woman, of a feende, of an asse, or of a goorde? Or how that goorde should haue preached, done miracles, or bene hanged on the crosse? Or what shoulde Peter haue consecrated if he had consecrated what time Christs bodi hung on the crosse Or whether Christ beyng transformed so into a goord, might at the same tyme be called man also? Or whether after the resurrection it be leefull for men to eate or drinke? as who saith, pzauidyng foz hunger and thurst afore hande. Innumerable suche fine toyes haue they, much moze subtile than these, of Instantes, formalitees, quiddites, Ecceites, whiche no man I beleue could espie out, vnlesse he were so clere eied, as to see out in a deepe darke darknesse those things that be no where. I maie adde also here to their sentences or sawes, whiche are so estraunge and beyonde all expectacion, as the very Stoikes sentences called Paradoxes, beyng compared to theirs, seme grosse, and moze than vulgar. (Foz exemple) Lesse sinne is it, saie they) to slea a thousand men, than ones on a sondaie to clowte a poore mans shoe. Oz rather should we let all the world goe to wrecke both with dogge and catte (as they saie) than ones to make a lesing, be the matter neuer so lyght. Now againe, these theyr subtile subtilties, doe they make yet moze subtile, through so many sozts of Scholemen as they haue.

So that easier you shall finde it to wind out of a mase, then out of their intricat names of Reales, Nominales, Thomistes, Albertistes, Occamistes and Dunsmen, yet these be not all, but the principal onely. But turne you to whiche sect of the ye will, and ye shall proue the same to be so cumyng, so difficult, and so full of hiegh Misteries, as I wene the apostles theim selues had neede to be enstructed by a new spirite, in case vpō the matters they were compelled to argue with this new kynde of doctours. Paule coulde expresse what faieth was: yet whan he saide thus, *faith is the substance of things to be hoped after, and an euidence of thinges not yet apearyng.* This Diffinicion (saie they) was not Magistraliter (id est) doctourlyke sette foorth by hym. And, as Paule coulde verie well teache what was Charitee, so did he not yet (saie they) *halfe like a Logicien either diffine, or deuide the same,* in the first epistle, and .xiii. chapitre to the Corinthiens. The apostles likewyse did holily and deuoutly enough consecrate the sacrament of Christes bodie: and yet, who so had apposed them in terminus à quo, and terminus ad quem, or in *transubstanciacion, or by what meanes the selfe same bodie of God maie be in diuers places at ones?* or *of the difference thei put now betwene Christs bodie as it is in heauen, as it was on the crosse, and in the sacrament of the altare:* Or *at what instant the transubstanciacion is made, seinge the praier, the vertue whereof it is made, is euer passinge ouer as it is in saieng?* These quaynt questions (wene I) the apostles woulde neuer haue soluted with lyke quicknesse of engin, as our Dunsmen doce bothe argue, and diffine vpon the same. The apostles knew the virgin mother of Iesus: but whiche of them did

The sectes of whole doctours.

did euer expounde so clerkly, how she was preserued from Originall sinne, as our doctours doe? Peter receiued heauen keies: *Yea receiued them at his handes* (say they) *that wouldе neuer haue committed the same to one vnworthie theim.* Now whether he knew so muche or no, I can not tell: but this I am sure of, that he neuer touched this narrowe poincte, how it cometh to passe, *that he also maie haue the kеie of science, who hath no science at all.* The apostles Baptized euery where, and yet thei neuer taught what is the formal, material, efficient, or final cause of Baptisme, nor euer made mention of the character delible and indelible. The apostles praied, but praied in the spirite, folowynge that saiyng of the gospell, *God is a spirite, and who so worshiр him, must worshiр al in the spirite, and in trouthe.* But now it apeareth, that it was not than reueled vnto theim, how we ought with all one praier, and lyke reuerence, worshiр an Image drawne perhaps with a cole on the wall, as if the same were Christ hym selfe. So it be made with .ii. blessing fyngers of the right hand stretched out, and a ball in the other, with longe heare shеded, and a coronet in maner of a platter vpon his noddle, decked with thre soonebeames. For who is he so pregnant witted, that might euer grope out these misteries, vnles he had spent whole xxvi. yeeres togethеes in studiyng the Phisicals and Vltramundans of Duns, and Aristotle? The apostles also preached grace vnto the people: but yet they neuer made so narow distinction betwene gratia gratis data, and gratia gratificans. They exhorted men to good worke, yet neuer put difference betwene opus operans, and opus operatum. They bydde vs in many

places kepe charitie: but neuer deuise the same into Charitas infusa, and Charitas operata, nor erpoūd not whether it be an accident, or a substance, a create, or an vncreate thing. They dishort vs from sinne, but I rente my selfe, if euer they coulde cunningly diffine, what that should be, we call sinne: Unlesse they were inspyred with the spryte of these Duns doctours. For I can neuer beleue, that Paule, vpō whose writting we may gesse what mynde the other apostles had therein, woulde euer so often haue reproued and condempned such questions, disputacions, genealogies, & cōflictes of woord (as he calleth theym) in case hym selfe had euer been instructed in their fine quiddities. Namely in as muche as all the contencions, and debates in arguing, whiche chaunced in his time, were but blunte, and very grosse, in comparison of these twyse sykted subtilties, that our Maister doctours vse now a dates. How be it they can so muche they? good, that where in any place they finde ought written by the apostles not formally, and Magistraliter, that they reproue not, but handsomely rather doo interpretate it as best serueth for they? purpose: bearing (as who saith) thus muche reuerence partly to the antiquitie, and partlye to the name of apostleship. And surely it were to muche to require so high mattiers at the appostles handes, who neuer heard one woorde therof mencioned by they? maister Christ. But in case they take either Chrisostome, Basile, or Hierome with the lyke trippe, than they take it sufficient for theim to subscribe, *that they allow it not.* And yet those auncient good fathers, rather through they? holie life and miracles, than by any

argu-

argumentes and Silogiſmes, confuted bothe Ethenikes, and Philoſophers, and Iewes, beyng bent of nature to ſtubbournelle, yea and thoſe alſo, neuer a one of whom were able to compaſſe and vnderſtande the leaſt quodlibet of Duns. But now, haue ye any paynim, or hereſike, that will not geue place and yelde ſtraight to ſo many fine fine argumentz of our maiſter doctors? Vnleſſe he were ſo groſſe, that he wiſſe not what they ment? or ſo ſhameleſſe to hiſſe at theim? or rather fenſed with lyke armour? ſo that now they were matches as if ye ſhould ſet one enchaunter againſt an other, or an Oſiues for a Rolande. For than the battaile were euer new to beginne. And ſurely in my iudgement chriſten prynce ſhoulde doe politikely, in ſtede of theſe bendes of groſſe Lanſknightz, who not ſeeldome (prouffe theweth) dooe ſpeede as well euill as better, to arme, and ſende foorth all theſe baulyng Dunſmen, and ſtubbourne Occaniſtes, and inuincible Albertiſtes, together with the whole rablement of Sophiſtrers, againſt the Turkes and Sarasins. They ſhould ſee (I thynke verely) a ſtraunge kynde of ſkyrmyſhe, and ſuche a victorie as neuer was heard of. For who is he ſo cold herted, that woulde not ſtraight be inflamed with their pregnant deuiſes? Or who is he ſo blunt, and reſtiue, that coulde not with theyr pickant ſpurres be quickened? Or who ſo clere ſighted, that may not with ſuche darke miſtes as they caſt, be blinded? But all this perchaunce ye wene I ſpeake halfe in moccage. And truely no meruayle. Seeyng euen amongz theſe Diuines ye ſhall fynde out ſome ſuche, as beyng inſtitute in a better trade of learnyng, dooe lothe, and abhorre ſuche riddles and So-

phistical trifles of these Dunsmen, Some other against that dooe curse and detest the same, as a kind of Sacrilege, esteemyng it plaine wickednesse and impietee, to speake so vnreauerently by so hiegh secretes of Scripture, whiche rather we shoulde haue in veneracion, than after suche rate goe about to expounde theim, or with so prophane Ethnical problemes to dispute vpon theim, or arrogantly define theim, defilynge and bespottyng the maiestee of holy scripture with so colde, naie rather filthie woordes and sentences. But this notwithstandynge, the other coddes heddes in the meane while stande moste pleasantly in theyr owne grace, or verilier stroke them selues on the head. So that occupiynge them selues bothe nightes and daies, about these foolyshe toyes, they haue neuer thus muche leysure, ones to reade ouer the gospell, or Paules epistles: and yet in trifling out the tyme thus in their scholes, they beleeue verily it is they, that proppe vppe holy churche, whiche els shoulde goe to ruine, none otherwyse with their Sillogismes, than poetes feigne that Atlas the geaunt sustaigneth heauen vpon his shoulders. But now, how lordly is their felicitee (trow ye) whyles they take vpon theim to forme and reforme holy scripture at their pleasure, as if it were a nose of waxe, or a Welshemans hose: and whiles they woulde their conclusions, wherunto a certaine of some vniuersitie haue subscribed, shoulde be holden for more then statutes, yea more fyrme and inuiolable, than the bishop of Romes Decretals: And whiles also like iudges ouer the whole worlde, they call echo thyng to recantacion, that one heare breedth disagreeth from theyr explicite, and im-

plicite

plicite conclusions: Pronouncyng as if it came from a prophetes mouthe, how *this propocion is sclaunderous, this not reuerent, this smelleth of the fagote, this soundeth nought.* So that nowe a dates, not Baptisme, nor the gospell, nor Paule, ne Peter, nor Hierome, ne Augustine, nor yet Thomas of Alquyne, who is euen Aristotles heyre and one hande, or able to make a man christian, vnlesse these fathers bachilers of diuinitee, dooe vouchesaue to subscribe vnto the same. So narrow and profounde iudgement haue they, in discussyng of all maner doubt. For who woulde euer haue thought hym to be of no catholyke beleefe, that affyrmed these two sayng, matula putes, and matula putet: also ollæ feruere, & ollam feruere, to be bothe congruent, vnlesse these wisemen had taught vs the contrarie? Or who els might euer haue ridde the churche from so great darkneſſe of errours, whiche no man I thynke wold euer haue red, or loked on, vnleſſe they vnder the great seales of theyr vniuersitees, had in condempnyng discouered them? But are they not moſt blissfull (trow ye) whiles they busie them selues hereabout? and moreouer whiles they deserue and peynete vnto vs all thinges doone in hell, so exactly as if many yeres they had sojourned in the diuels court? Or whiles as lyketh them they dooe builde new heauens, addyng also one heauen set aboue all the other, most fayre and rownde, least els perchance saincte soules should haue no elbowroome to walke, or bankette, or playe at tenes also if them listed, With these, and with two thousande suche other trifles, are theyr heades so stuffed, and swolne vppe, as not Iupiters head (trow I) was euer so pestred, what tyme he bo-

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rowed Vulcanes axe to hewe Pallas out of his brayne. And therfore haue ye no meruaile at al, though at their Actes and Comencement, ye dooe see theim swadled in with so many cappes, coynes, and furde hoodes as they weare, for els I thynke plainely they? heade? wold ryue asunder, One thynge, I my selfe am wont to laugh at, so often as I here theim speake their barbarous brasse latine, wherin natheles they would be compted most doctourlike. That whan they fumble it out in such a sort, as none but fumblers as thei, may vnderstande them, yet dooe they call it a certaile grace and finesse, whiche euery bodie can not attaine vnto. For (saie they) it is not for the dignitee of holie writte, our profession, that we shoulde be compelled to folow any grammer rules, whiche surely (so beyng) is a great maiestee of these Duns Doctours, if to them onely it be lawfull to speake false latine. notwithstandyng that many coblers and clouters can dooe that as wel as thei, Lastly now, they take them selues in a maner for Gods peres, whan they are saluted solemnely by the name of maister doctours, or Magister noster: wherin thei wene lyke misterie to be included, as the iewes saie there is in Τετραγράμματον: and therfore they affirme it to bee a muche greate offence, if one do write, MAGISTER NOSTER otherwyse than with great letters, that and if ye tourne the word?, saiyng noster Magister in steede of Magister noster, than all at ones ye disorder the maiestee of the Theological name. Nowe next vnto the felicitee of these maister doctours, suche dooe approche as people call Religious men, and Monkes, that is to saie, solitarie liuers, but by bothe names euil

The solen weade of schole doctours.

Religious men.

applied

applied: seing the greatest part of them are most farre from religion, and none so comonly shall you mete rouing abrode, euen in euery alehouse. Whose trade and obseruaunce surely wer most miserable and abiect, vn lesse that I did many waies releue them. For thoughe this kynde of men be comonly so abhorred, as euen to mete with them at vnwares, or next a bodies rysynge, it is taken for a signe of euel lucke all the date after: yet (lorde) how thei make theim selues to bee more than Cherubyns. For first thei holde it a great holinesse, to meddle so little with bookes, and learnyng, as scarce they know how to read their owne names. And whan thei rore foorthe (lyke a meny of asses) in their monasteries, a noumbre of psalmes not vnderstanden, than thei wene verily to sede sainctes eares with a meruailous melodie. Moreouer, some orders of them (namely Friers) dooe take a pride in their beggerie, in going from dore to dore to axe their breade with a great lowyng voyce, pestring men euery where, both in innes, in wagens, and in passengers, not a little (I promise you) to the hindrance of other beggers. And thus (loe) the blinde minions, what with their grosinesse, doltishenesse, rudenesse, and shamelesse hangyng on men, dooe represent vnto vs (as theim selues saie) the lyke of the apostles. But is it not a comelynesse (trow ye) whan they dooe all thynges by certaine presidents of theyr orders, muche lyke Mathematicall rules, which in no wyse without offence, thei maie alter, or swerue fro, As for example, *how many wyndowes they muste make to theyr shooes? what colour, and noũbre of knottes goeth to their gurdelles? with what difference, and wherof must their weedes*

be made? of what breadth their lether thounges? howe many fussbelfuls their coules? how many ynches longe, there notted beare? and how many houres for sleping? Now who is he that seeth not how vnequall this equalitie of theirs is, name lie in such a diuersnesse of bodies, and dispositions? Yet vnder confidence of these trifles, they not only set lay men as light as butterflies, but euin among? them selues despise eche other. So that for all the apostolyke charitie, whiche they professe, ye shall not see them sticke to fall together by the eares, either for a gurdell of a contrary faction, or a garment somewhat of a browner or lighter colour. Yea, some of theym being of a straighter rule, are so sore punishers of they? flesshe, as outwardly they weare naught but sacke clothe, and inwardly no better than fine hollande. Some others againe dare as soone touche poyson as money, neuer the more forbearinge from wine, nor contrectation of women. Finally all they? delite is to accorde in no poinct as touchinge the rules of they? religions. For they loke not how to resemble Christ, but sooner howe among? theim selues to be dissemblable: esteminge further a great parte of they? felicite to consiste in the names of their orders. For some of them reioyse to be called grey friers, some vvhite, these Colletes, they Minors, other Obseruaunt?, other Crossed, some Benedictines, some Bernardines, these Camelites, those Augustines, these Guilhelmites, those Iacobites &c. As who sayeth it were to slender a name for theim to be called bare christians. Now agayne most parte of theym are so geuin to they? ceremonies, and tradicios of men, as maketh them wene, that one heauen is not

a com-

a condigne, and sufficient reward for so great merites of theyr, little remembring that Christe nothinge regarding theyr superstitions, will onely call to accompt how they haue obserued his precept of charitie. Were one of theim (may chance) will for his discharge shew forth a trowgh stuffed full of all kinde of fisshe. An other wyll poure foorth an hundred quarters of psalmes. An other, wyll noumbre vp millions of fastinges, casting God in the tethe that so often with eating but one meale a daie, his beli was nere burst. An other, will bringe foorth whole packes of ceremonies, so many as scarce might be freyghted in .vii. great hulkes. An other, will make his auaunt, that whole .x. yeres togethers he neuer touched money, but (at least) his handes were fensed with two paire of gloues. An other, will shewe foorthe his cowle, or scapilarie so sweate, and full of greese, as no mariner would gladly put it on. An other, will say that sins tyme of his noniceship he neuer passed the bandes of his cloyster, muche like a sponge cleuinge euer to one place. An other, that he is hoarce with dayly singinge. An other, how through to muche solitarinesse, he is fallen into a benummednesse. An other, how his tounge throughe continuall silence hath loste his vse. But Christ interrupting theyr Selfbostes, why the els woulde neuer take ende, whence cometh (wyll he saye) this new race of Jewes, I doo acknowlage but one lawe and rule for myne, wherof I here neuer a woorde spoken. For whilom playnlie, and by no shadow of parables, I promised my fathers kingdome not to Cowles, nor Rosaries, nor set fasting? but rather to the woorkes of charitie: nor I know none suche, as to muche know their owne good woorkes. These men wolde be countped holier than my selfe: let them dwel therfore if they list in Pasquilles heauen. Or doo they cause those to prepare

a new heaven for theim, whose tradicions thei haue preferred before my preceptes. Nowe whan thei here Christe saie thus, and see bothe carters, and ploughmen, preferred before theim, with what countenance (suppose ye) will one of theim beholde an other? Natheles in the meane tyme they are happie in theyr owne hope, not without my helpe largely employed on theim. Specially seyng for all thei are dead (as they saie) to this worlde, no man dare yet contemne theim, and lest of al friers, in as muche as thei are maisters of mens secretes by vertue of that thei call confession: whiche secrets thei compt it great sinne to discouer, vnlesse at some tymes hauing tasted a little of the ale, thei thinke good to recreate theim selues with sportyng tales a crasshe, onely by coniectures and lykelihoods to poincte you to the thyng, suppressing yet mens names of their modestie. That and if any man sterreth vp these hornets, than in sermons to the people haue thei a readie way to wreke their tene, by touchynge their ennemies not directely, but in parables, so closely I warrante you, as no man could not perceiue them, but if he perceiued nothing at all. And neuer will thei make an ende of barkyng till some fatte morsell be cast them, to stop their mouthes. But who in the meane whyle wold not gladlier behold one of these frier preachers how thei counterfeicte the Rhetoriciens in their sermons (lowsely god knoweth) but yet finely folowing those rules that Oratours leue written of the Arte of pronouncing, than any stage player, or Italian pardoner? Good lorde, what straunge iestures they frame? how thei singe their woordes? how they caste their armes hither and thither? howe they

changs

chaunge the cople of their countenaunces: howe they mingle all thinges with outeries: whiche they? sayde arte in preaching, conueied by one frier to an other, as it were from hande to hand, for a muche priuey thinge, all be it vnleefull for me to know, yet I shall make you a geese at it as nere as I can. In the beginnyng the refore of they? sermons, they vse some Inuocacion but that thei borow of the Poetes. Then admitte they? Theme renne on charitee, thei fetche they? prohemefrom Nilus the great riuer in Aegipte. Dr entendyng to erpounde the misterie of the crosse, they beginne aptly with Beel the dragon of Babylon. Dr disputyng of fasting, thei fetche their race from the .xii. signes of the Zodiake. Dr purpolynge to speake of faithe, they make a longe preamble *how a circle in Geometrie maie be made quadrate*. I my selfe heerd ones a solemne lowte, (I crie you mercie) a solemne learned man I should haue saide, who in his sermon, before a great assemblie, taking vpon him to declare the mistery of the Trinitee, to the ende he mighte bothe shewe his learnynge to the people, and satisfie the eares of some doctours there present, toke a new fetch in the mattier. For what from letters, to sillables, and to dictions, and than the concordes betwene the Nouvne and the Verbe, the Nouvne adiectiue and Substactine (diuers of the audience now merualyng, and saiyng to theim selues, weat the diuell ayleth he) at last he brought it to this passe, that *he shewed the figure of the whole trinitee to be so exactly described and expressed in the rules of gramer, as no geometricie might plainlier draw it with his finger in the dusse*. Which sermon the saied doctourlyke doctour

Preachers

A madde tale of a preacher.

whole eyght monthes together so ernestly had sweate about, as vntill this daie, he is as poreblinde as a betle. And no meruayle, seyng he drew vp all the sharpenesse of his eie sight, to the poinct of his engin: but for all that he nothyng forthinketh his blindnesse. rather taking the same for to chepe a price of suche a glorie as he wanne therby. Lykewyse, not longe agone I was present at the sermon of an other famous doctour beyng almost 80. yeres old, and therto so doctourlyke, as if Duns were new arisen in him, who entending to disclose the mistery of the name of Iesu, with great subtiltie shewed, how euin in *the verie letters was as muche pithe included, and might be gathered therof.* For wheras it is declinable but in three cases, as Iesus, Iesum, Iesu, that (saied he) *was a manifest representacion of the Trinitie,* Than because the fyrst terminacion of Iesus endeth in S, the seconde in M, the thyrde in V, thereby laye a right secrete misterie, in as muche (quod he) as the very letters doo declare that Iesus, is Summus, Medius, and Vltimus, (that is) the firste, the middest, and the last. An other misteri he alleged farre more strãge than these, diuiding this woorde Jesus, as it were by geometrie into two egall partz, leuynge S, in maner of a stickler in the middle: whiche letter in the Hebrews A B C, is W, and they call it Syn. *Now synne* (quod he) *in englisshe is as muche to say as deadly offence against God, so herebi it appeared, that Jesus was the stickeler or mediatour, that toke on him the sinnes of this worlde.* This so strange and farre fetched a beginning, al men did gape at so, chiefely the doctours there presente, as little lacked that they were not chaunged throughe astonnednesse

stonnednesse into stones as poetes feigne by Niobes. whereas I for my parte through laughter, had almost let goe a shaue, as Priapus did for feare of the two witches Canidia, and Sagana, whan it chaunced him to see their sorceries by night season: and who could haue blamed me if I hadde so dooen? For whan didde euer Demosthenes or Cicero, vse the lyke farre fetche in any of theyr orations? They take that Proheme to be faultie, whiche hunge not applyable with the reste of theyr matter: as who saieth, there be any man so grosse that euen of nature is not instructed to dooe so muche. But my doctours now a dates take theyr preample (so they call it) to be most Rhetorical, whan it iopgneth lest with any other part of theyr Theme: whiche maketh the hearer, meruailyng at the estraungnes of the deuise oftentimes to mutter to him selfe, *now whither the diuel wilt thou*. Thirdly in steede of a narracion, they expounde somewhat of the gospel, but that very briefly and shortely passed ouer, wheras they ought to entreate thereof onely, all theyr sermon through. In the fourth place, sallyng as it were into a new matter they moue some doctorall question, sometyme suche *as toucheth neither heauen nor earth*, whiche they take yet to serue muche to theyr purpose. And here (loe) they beginne to spreade theyr armes, in allegyng auctorites out of *solemne doctours, subtile doctours, most subtile doctours seraphicall doctours, holy doctours, irrefragable doctours*, and such other goodly bigge names of theyr Schole pillers And here they spowte out theyr Sillogismes, theyr maiors, minors, and conclusions, theyr corollaries, and mosse balde suppositions, with suche other trifles be-

fore

fore the rude people, as if thei were in theyr most ruffe disputinge Pro, et contra in their Scholes. Resteth now the fifte Acte or parte, wherein it behoueth them to shew foorth all their cunning and profunditie Here now (may chaunce) they come foorth with some foolisshe tale taken out of Vitas patrum, or Gesta Romanorum, moralisyng the same bothe Allegorically, Tropologically, and Anegogically. And thus muche after this rate doo they knitte vp all theyr Chimera, or straũge shapen beast, with sundrier sortes of formes and facions, than euer Horace described it, in the beginnyng of his boke De arte poetica. But they haue learned, I wotte neuer of whom, that the entrye and beginning of an oracion must be caulmely vttred without anye lowde voyce, or exclamacion. So they therfore beginne theyr preambles so stilly, as scarce they can here theyr owne voices, perhaps because it auayleth them to speake somewhat, that none shoulde vnderstande. They haue heard also how crying? out must sometimes be vsed to moue vp mens affections: and therfore speakyng a pretie while all stilly, euin at a brunt they fall into a skrekynge key, and fyll mens eares with a crying shrillenesse, where thei haue least nede at all. Moreouer because they haue redde in Rhetorike bokes, that an Oracion shoulde somewhat kindle, and waxe hote in processe of argument?, Thei, in euery parte of theyr Sermons, the entrie into the same being somwhat more demurely pronounced, by and by dooe fall into a wonderous lowde chafynge voyce, be the mattier they entreate of ueuer so colde, and leaue of so, as if theyr brethes failed theim. Lastly

ly hauyng vnderstode, that Rhetoriciens geue certaine precepts of laughter stirryng, they also peine theim selues to enterlace theyr Sermons with some mery conceites: but (O the will of god) how full of grace be the same? and how aptly brought in theyr right places? *as if an asse were set to plaie on a gitterne.* Sometymes also they fare as they woulde nippe folke with theyr quippies. but so feinctly (god knoweth) as rather they dooe tickle, than pynche depelter. But neuer dooe thei flatter more kyndly, than whan thei pretende to speake moste freely, and without respecte. Finally all theyr cast in preachyng is suche, as a man would sweare thei had gone to schole with these Ceretans, suche as in Italie are wont in markette places standing on stalles, or where they may bee seen best, to preach vnto the people in commendacion of some pardone, feigned medecines, or suche lyke toyes of theyr owne inuencion, to gette money withall, and bleare the simples eies. Whiche Ceretans natheleste doe farre passe them in theyr grace All be it (to speake indifferently) the one of theim is so lyke the other, as none will doubt, but either they haue learned at those, or those at these againe. But what nede these my frier preachers to passe theron? seeynge through my procurement thei neuer misse of such, as in hearyng theim, beleue verily thei heare Demosthenes, and Giceros matches: of whiche opinion chiefly bee merchaunts, and good wiues, whose eares and lykyng friers dooe wholy studie to satisfie. For merchauntes in case they be handsomely glosed, are wonte to geue theim in Commedum some portion of theyr misgottes goods, and women besides many other consideracions

Merchaunts and women.

ons are specially enclined to them, for that they are wont to poure into theyr bosomes what euer euill will they bare in theyr hertes against theyr husbandz. Thus, ye consider (I trow) how muche this race of Religious men, is indebted vnto me, whan now with theyr Ceremonies and fonde fantasies of theyr owne, now with theyr baulynge and cryng out in pulpittes, they dooe exercise a maner tyrannie amongz men, and woulde be coumpted for more then Paules or Antonies. But seeyng they be suche inglers, as can no lesse vnkyndly dissemble, and seeme not to acknowlage my benefytes employed on them, than they are otherwyse craftilie counterfeitcours of holinesse, I holde it best to speake no more of them. For I longe sore a little now to treate of kynges and princes liues, who moste plainely and gentilmanly, as gentilmen, dooe entertaine me. Where as they considered well what belongeth to theyr estates (now I see not what life might be more carefull than theirs, nor lesse to be desyred. For such shal neuer thynke that a kyngdome shoulde either by vsurpacion, or any other wrongfull title bee sought for, as dooe wate with theim selues, what a charge he sustaineth on his shoulders, that rightly will execute the office of a prince: who takyng vpon him the rule of thyngz dooeth now administer not his owne, but rather the affaires of many, wherby he shulde thinke of naught els but the common weale, obseruyng iustly the lawes wherof he is bothe founder, and ouerseer, to the ende his vprightnesse, and integritee maie be a presidente to his vnderrulers and officers, whan eyther being iuste and vertuous, like a blissfull sterre of lucky aspecte hee

Kynges & princes.

maie

maie bringe bothe health and coumfort to all his subiectes, or otherwise, lyke a pestilent Comete, be theyr ruine and destruction: In as muche as meaner mens vices be not so muche marked, nor so largely deuulged. But a prince is set in that place, where as if he wyte hym selfe neuer so little from that becommeth hym, straight waies the infection of the exemple crepeth contagiously to many men: Besydes that, how muche more the height of a princes fortune maie be a meanes to peruerte him from the right trade, either through pleasure, libertee, adulation, or delicateneffe, so muche the warelier thoulde he resist them, watchynge diligently, lest at any tyme beinge seduced, he doue swerue from his dutee. And lastly (omittyng treasons, hatreds, and other perills or dreades, wherewith a prince is infested) if he remember how the dome also of the heigheft, and most rightfull kynge of all, hangeth ouer his head, who soone after will call him to accompte for the leaft faulte hee hath done, yea and that the narowlier, the greater state he had committed to him: These thynges, (I saie) and many lyke hereto, if a prince do perpende wel, (and perpende theim he muft nedes if he hath wisedome) I beleeue surely he shoulde take his slepe and fode, with lesse gladneffe, than a farre meaner persone doeeth. But now, how many princes haue you, whiche through my procurement, remittyng all care and charge hereof to the goods, doue for the moste parte onely tende theyr owne pleasure? So that admitte we feigne nowe the image of some one prince, suche as not seeldome hath been, a man (for exemple) vnskilled in the lawes, enemie in a maner to the commen weale, geuen only to his

peculier profite, addicted all to voluptuousnesse, an hater of learnyng, an hater of libertee, and of the trueth, caryng nothyng lesse than for the aduauncement of his countrey, but rather applyinge all thyngs to his owne plesure and commoditee, And now (on gods name) geue him a chayne about his necke, for token that all vertues ihoulde agreablie be enchayned in hym: geue him also a crowne frette with perle and stone, in sygne he ought to excell others in all princely vertues, than a sceptre in his hand betokennyng iustice with an vpright mynde on all sydes: lastly a Robe of purpre, whiche signifieth zeale and feruent affection towarde his subiectes: This maner apparaile (I saie) if that prince ihoulde duely conferre with his liuing, I wene he wold be ashamed to weare it, fearing lest some fine expositor myght tourne all his pompe and solemnesse of royall robes into derision: namely whan he hath no maner part of a prince in hym, sauyng onely the clothynge.

The apparayle of a prince.

Now lykewyse what saie you to Courtiers? these minion gaberdeen gentilmen, who beyng for the most part as fawnynge, as seruyle, as wittelesse, and as abiect as can be deuised, woulde be taken yet amongs all men for the principall. But although they pryde in other poynctes exceedeth, yet herein surely they shew a greatte modestee, whan beyng contented to haue theyr bodies outwardly garnished with golde, with gemmes, with silkes, and with other representations of vertue and wisedome, they geue ouer the studie, and vse of the thyngs selfe to other men, not caryng how they leaue theyr myndes naked, without any apparayle of disciplines; reputynge theim selues most happie, for that they

Courtiers

they haue learned the phrase of courte speche, at euery woorde to choppe in these goodly titles of honour, *your noble grace, your royall highnesse, your excellent maiestee:* And that theyr faces lyke visers will blusshe at nothyng: and finally that in bourdynge, and in flyrynge, they can flatter pleasantly. For these be the qualitees they holde moste meete for a kynd gentilman, and ruffler of the courte. But nowe who so narowlier woulde approche, and ensearche theyr trade of liuynge, shoulde fynde theim I warrant you, to be more blunte and vnwittie, than euer were the auncient people of Phœacia, and thereto more dissolute than those wowers were that desyred Penelopes in mariage. Sponsi Penelopes, ye know what foloweth in the verse, whiche I had rather that Eccho (as she euer dooeth the later woordes) shoulde declare vnto you, than I. These my hoglyng slepe euery daie till midnoone, and hauyng euin yet theyr eyes full of slepe, they sende then for some hunting chaplaine, who whiles they are in makynge ready, or rather risyng out of their beddes, maie slynge them vp a post masse. In the necke whereof commes theyr breckfast, and that scantly finished, gooe they to diner. After that to the dyse, to tables, to cardes, or to boules, nowe with iesters, nowe with fooles, now with courtesanes, daunces, and daliaunc to trifle out the tyme, not without one, or two collacions afore supper, and after supper theyr bankett one vpon an other. And thus without felyng any tediousnesse of their life, they passe easily ouer, bothe houres, daies, monthes, yeres, and whole ages. In sort that I my selfe am not seeldome throughe hauntynge with theim

Sponsi penelopes nebulones Alcinoiq;

made the latter, and gladly would neuer parte compa-
ny, sauyng that sometyme seyng how amonges the da-
moysels and Madames of the courte, they shew them
selues in their maistresses colours, and commonly doo
vaunt theim selues of that they haue not, or neuer did,
I can not kepe my selfe from laughter. Moreouer see-
yng how among? those Nymphes and Madames, eche
reputeth hir selfe the more woorthie of honour and e-
state, the longer taile she trayneth after hir. Seeyng
also how the gentilmen of the court doo shoue one an
other, and preasse for a show of estimation to bee nerte
their prince, as who saieth depelieth in his fauour. And
seyng lastly how they stand in their owne conceite, mu-
che esteemyng them selues, as the more woorthy a cappe
and reuerence, the greatter chaynes thei haue, as if thei
desired not onely to shew their richesse in wearing the
but also their strength of shoulders in bearyng theim.

Cardinals & bishops.

But now (on good? halfe) lenger than of late dayes,
Pope holy fathers of Rome, Skarlet Cardinals, and
blessyng bishops, haue not onely folowed the steppes
of princes, as touchyng their pompe and magnificence,
but dooen also what they can to surpasse them. Yet
surely if a bishop perpended with him selfe, what is
ment by the linen rochet so pureli of white that he wea-
reth? Mary that his liuyng likewise should be nete,
and cleane from any spotte of sinne: Or if he thought

The appa raile of a bishop

thus, that his mytre beyng deuided so into two hornes,
eche typpe wherof is with the like knobbe gathered to-
gether, were set for a figure of the perfect knowlage he
ought to haue bothe in the olde and new Testament.
Or if he wiste that the gloues on his handes did signi-
fie,

fie, how he ought as purely, and without any soyle of worldlynesse to administer the sacrament?: And how his crosiers staffe admonished him of the wakery charg he shoulde take ouer his flocke: And how his crosse borne before him (be he an archebishop) pretended victorie ouer all worldly affections: These sygures (I saie) and many lyke hereto, in case a bishop did consider & conferre accordingly, I beleue he could not chose but leade an heauie and carefull life: Yea but at these dais (I can tel you) thei take as little thought therefore, as all theyr thought is how they maie faire fede theim selues, remittyng all care of theyr flocke vnto Chryste, or rather resignyng the same to suche as they call theyr vicares, and Suffragans. In whiche case they remembre little theyr name. For Episcopus, is as muche to saie, as a superintendent or watcheman, who busily tended and toke hede to his charge and commission.

Now be it (in dede) as touchonge kisshynge for money, and heappng vp of treasure baggs, they furnyshe fully that theyr names importeth, and therin shew them selues to be no blinde wachemen. Moreouer, if Cardinals likewise did consider (seyng thei chalenge to succede in the apostles places) how at theyr handes also is requyred that sanctitee and perfection, that the apostles were of: And further, how they are no lords, but rather stewerds and administratours of spirituall giftes and graces, for the whiche soone after they muste duely and exactely render accoumpte: Yea if they did but argue a while vnto theim selues vpon theyr garment, and thinke thus: Mardie the whitenesse, and pure netenesse of this rochet I weare on, signifieth how

The apparaile of Cardinals.

I also shoulde leade a pure and right innocent life. This cramoysen gowne, whiche I haue vnderneth it, admonisheth me I shoulde be as feruently enflamed in the loue of god. This vtter robe also beyng so large and so lōger trained, as sufficeth to ouerspred mine, the most *reuerende fathers moyse*, were she as lofty as any camell, doth it not pretende, that charitee shoulde abound, and be so largely spreadde in me, as I shoulde offre my selfe to helpe and releue all men: be it in teachyng, exhortyng, coumfortyng, rebukyng, or aduertisyng my euen christen: or be it in appesynge of warres betwene countreis, or resisting of wicked princes, yea or in spendynge of my bloude for christes sake, muche more my worldly goods with a gladde hert: Now be it I see not by reason, what I shoulde dooe with worldly goods, I, that take vpon me wholy to imitate and represent the apostles, who like good soules went prooredy and barefooted. These thyngs (I saie) if Cardinals did consider and take well to hert, they wold not gape so gredily after that dignitee, naie willinglier woulde refuse it, or at least, as did the Primitiue apostles, leade a trauailesome and carefull life, in attendyng to their offices

Bishops of Rome.

Moreouer if these thrise holy fathers, Popes of Rome, and Christes vicares (as they name them selues) did as erneftly folow the exemple of Christes life, in embracyng of pouertee, or peynfull teachynge of the people, or in bearyng of his crosse, and contempt of this worlde, or if they dide but thinke a while vppon the name of Pope, which they chalenge peculierly, and is as much to saie as father, or the title *of most holy father*, as they lole to bee called: Now I see not what men in all the worlde

worlde shulde (by right) liue in greater carefulnesse and affliction than they. For I see not vpon what hope the rankest Symoniakes of the might reckon, if they reked hereon, that all theyr goodes and faculties were to scant to deale in bribes to the Cardinals for their voices: or hauing ones purchased that roume with theyr pennie, wolde than so manfully defend and kepe it, bothe with swoorde, with poyson, and with all other effoorce.

Good lorde, howe many pleasures and commodities shoulde wysedome at one plucke bereue theim, in case they did but ones looke her in the face? Wisedom saide I? May yf they had but one grayne of that salt, wherof Christ maketh mention in the gospell, they woulde not hoorde vp so huge heapes of golde, so highe mountaines of honours, so large dominions, so many martiall victories, so many offices, so many dispensations, so many reuenues, so many tares, so many perdones, nor kepe such a numbre of pampred horses, and slicke shorne mooles, nor holde suche a court and garde about them with infinite other solace, to abound, or rather swimme in delices. Ye see (I trow) in these few woordes, howe great a sayle, & in maner a sea of pleasure and worldlie welthinesse I haue set afore you. In place wherof is there any of you thinketh, that Peters successours at these dayes, wolde willingly embrace fastyng, watchyng, teares in vehement prayer daily preachyng, studying on the scripture, or sighynge at mens offences, with thousand other suche deerie troubles, which they daily should than be subiecte to? Or doo you iudge peraduenture they coulde easily fynde in their hertes, that so many scriueners, so many registrers, so manie

Vertues apostolike

notaries, so many aduocates, so many promoters, so
The rable at Rome. many secretaries, so many moyleters, so many horsekepers, so many gentilmen of housholde, so many applesquiers, so many baudes,) I had almoste spoken a softer woorde, but I feare me it wolde haue sounded harder to your eares) briefely so great a rablement of sundrie men as doo way downe (I crie you mercy) I met, doo wayte on the See of Rome, shoulde haue cause to crie out on theym, whan with the tourne of an hande throughe theyr conuersion to a sobrer course of lyuynge those myght well enough be driuen to die for hunger: specially seing aboue the rigour and extremitie of such an heynous acte, a farre more detestable inconuenience shoulde folow, whan therby the prime selfe, and pillers of the churche, yea the verie Lampes (on gods name) whiche light the worlde, should be called backe agayne to a *bagge and a staffe*: wheras els they haue found out so good a shyft, and conueighance, what euer labour or toyle belongeth to their offices. to call it wholy on Peter and Paulus shulders, who haue leysour enough to welde it, whiles they may so good chepe reserue vnto theim selues all the pleasure and commodities of the same: wherby it cometh to passe, and all through my drifte, that no kinde of men liue more delicately, nor with lesse care than these holye fathers doo. For as for Christ, he (they thinke) may easily enough be pleased, so longe as they shew the selues like popes in their Mistical Pontificalibus, bolstred vp with ceremonies, and titles of blissednes, reuerendnes, and sanctitie, to bisse and curse whom they liste: what for the rest, it is stale with them, and out of vse at these dates to doo
Sodomie
myracles:

myracles, pepnefull, to teache the people scholerlyke, to expounde scripture: to pole a thynge, to praye: farre more milkesoplyke and womannisshe, to cast foorth teares: vile, to be nedie: dishonourable, to be ouercome: and most vnfitting for theim who scantly wyll admitte kynges and emperours to the killing of theyr feete: Finallie it is an vnsauoury thinge, to die: and as reprocheable, to be hanged on the crosse: So that refusyng to stande to any of these hard conditions, they rest onely vpon feates of armes, with also those sugred and doulcet benedictions of theirs, mencioned by Paule, with a thousande whereof I wene they woulde parte more liberally, than with one pennie: and sticke hardilie to theyr interdictions, suspencions, aggrauacions, redaggrauacions, anathemisacions, and peincted pictures set vp in churches, representeing such as they note for curled, or heretikes, with also that theyr dreadefull thunderbolt of excommunicacion, the dynt wherof at theyr onely becke is hable to ding downe seiy soules a thousande myles beyonde the depest dongeon in hell: which thunderbolt they leuell yet agaynst no men so vehementlie, as agaynst those, who through the diuels instinction doo go about to croppe Peters patrimonie: whiche (for all Peters owne woordes in the gospell. *Lorde, we haue left all to folow thee*) they expounde to be *landes, cities taxes, customes and dominions*. For maynteinaunce wherof whiles kyndled with the feruent zeale of Christ, they fight bothe with woorde, and with fyre, than they wene they do gaylie, and *apostolicallie defende Christes espouse the churche*, in rebuttinge and manfullie (as they saie) forchalynge of hir enemies. As who

Peters patrimonie.

saieth, there be any enemies more pernicious to christs churche, than wicked bisshops themselues: who suffre Christes name for lacke of their daily remembring to grow out of the peoples knowlage: & do bind Christ to certayne money lawes of their owne: and with wrested gloses and expositions doo bastard him: and lastly through the abhominable president of their lyfe doo eftesones crucifie him. In sorte, that wheras Christes churche was first founded vpon the bloud of hym hir autour, and reysed vp with the bloudde of the apostles, & enlarged with the bloud of so many martyrs now, as though Christ were no Christ, or that he were not hable as before to conserue his chosen, they in hyr defence doo trie their quarels onely at the swoordes poynete. That wheras warre (to speake absolutely) is so cruell and despiteous a thynge, as rather it becometh wilde beastes, than men, therto so furious and ragyng, as the verie Poetes doo feigne, that the Furies of hell doo let it slippe: also so pestilent a thynge. as drayweth for trayne al frothe and corruption of maners after it: Further so vnlust a thinge, as for the moste parte is best executed by the veriest theues and dissolsours that be: and lastly so vnchristian a thing, as in no thing accordeth with Christe. Yet doo these my Romishe prelates, settinge all other things a syde, onely studie and employe their tyme on warre. In whyche exercise ye shall se some of theym beinge so olde and wasted, that their bones rattle in their skinnes, so liuely yet turmoylyng, and prouely bent therto, as if they were waren younge agayne: neither sparing for colde, nor wered through labours, ne any thinge grudged in

mynde or agaste at it, though thereby al lawes, religiō, peace, and tranquillitie in humayne thyngꝫ be tourned topseturuie. For woorke they neuer so vngodlie, yet fayle they not of some glosers learned men, who in hope of promocion, will name and expounde this theyr open madnesse to bee a Zeale, to bee a Pietie, to bee a Spiritual manhode in them, bringing it by a new foūd meanes to passe, that now a man may thrust his sword into his brothers bealye, obseruing neuertheless that loue and perfite charitie, whiche Christe byddeth eche Christian to owe an other. And truely I am as yet in doubte, whether *bisshops in Almaine* haue giuē, or rather taken example hereat: seyng that somewhat playnlier, and without ani obseruaunce at all, vsed either in their wede, or blissinge, with suche like ceremonies as byshops woulde be knowen by, they doo playnely shewe theim selues to be temporall princꝫ, in sort that in a maner they coumpt it vilitie for theim to yelde theyr valiaunt soules to God, any where els than in a foughten fielde. And now, doo not *single priestes* (trowe yee) clinge as nere as they can to theyr prelates deuocion? For (loe) how warlike bothe with swoordes, with staues, and with stones, yea and by the teeth also the good vicars can striue for theyr tytherightꝫ? and how narowly loke they to fynde in olde writte or in doctours, any sentēce seruyng for theyr purpose, to geue terrour therby to theyr simple parisheners, yea and beare them downe, that they ought to pay more than theyr tenthes limitted. But for all theyr diligence in that behalfe, they are as indiligent remēbrers what is written in many places of scripture concerning theyr duities, and

Priestes.

what they on the other part ought to render and repay vnto the people. No not they? shauen crownes at leſt can warne theym, how prieſtes muſt be free from all worldlineſſe, to paſſe on nothing els, ſauing heauenlye treaſure. But ſooner at theſe dayes my Joſie ſir Johns doo take it for a ſufficient furniture of their roomes, as lōge as they mumble ouer their portes ſeruice, they care not how rachely, whiche (on my faith) I wonder what god heareth, or vnderſtandeth: ſeinge they theym ſelues doo almoſt neither heare, nor wote what they ſaie, whan only with their lippes they make a certayne buſzynge, no whitte proceding from the hert. Howe be it (to ſaie the trouthe) it is a commen tatche naturally geuin to all men as well as prieſtz, to watche well for their owne lucre: for none is ſo vnſkilfull, that in thys point cannot ſkanne the lawes to the vttermoſt. But in caſe there be any wayght or charge thereon depenyng, that the clergie hath politikely learned to caſt on others ſhoulders. For lyke as princes are wonte to ordeyne vnder theim many Deputies and officers, who lykewyſe doo ſubſtitute Subdeputies in their ſteedes ſo dooeth the Clergie of their goodneſſe and ſinguler modeſtie, remitte all care of holineſſe to the lay people, and lay folke charge ſuche therwith as they cal Eccleſiaſticall or churchemen. as who ſaieth all maner Chriſtians had not to doo with the churche, or as if they profeſſed no ſuche thing by their fyrſt bowe of Baptiſme. Than agayne prieſtz that are named Seculers, as dedicate to the worlde and not to Chriſt, doo laye all thys burden on reguler prieſtz, who likewyſe tourne it ouer to Religious men, and religious men of an eaſier rule com-

commende the same to those of a straighter rule. But all with one assent doo cast their charge on Friers neckes, who natheles finde a meanes yet to conuey the same to *monkes of the charterhouse*, in whiche onely order, holinesse as in hir graue lieth hydden, yea and so hydden, as scant at any tyme she can be seen. Lykewyse holy fathers of Rome in tender consideracion of the dayly busines, wherwith they ar occupied about their money haruest, are faine to put bysshops in trust with all other too too Apostolike labours. But bishops disdeine not through humilitie to let persons supply their roomes, And persones like good felowes wolde their vicares should haue the doynge thereof: Than vicares sticke not to suffre friers to encroche vpon theim: And they agayne make resignement therof, to suche as day lie doo shere the woulle of Christes poore flocke.

But (hola) it is best for me to stoppe here, seing I toke not vpon me to boult out the maner of bishops and priestes liuinges now a dayes: lest any man should deme how I rather entended to ratle vp their vices, than to spred myne owne prayse, or lest ye might mistake me, as if good and vertuous princes were taūted of me, why les foolishely accordinge to my custome I doo commende the wicked. Nay rather I haue touched thus muche, with few woordes, to the ende it may appeare, how no mortall man can liue sweetely in ioye and pleasure, vnlesse he be a brother of mi fraternitie, and haue me to his friende and good ladie. For els, who is he dare looke for good happe, seeing Fortune hir self, the guidresse of al worldly chaunces, is so muche bente on my syde, as euer for the moste parte she is beaute mayStresse

Folie excuseth hir self that she speketh of the wicked & not of the good men.

Fortune allied with Folie.

ſtreſſe, and contrarious to theſe wyſemen, whereas to fooles on the other ſyde ſhe dealeth hir giftes ſo largely, as if ſhe crammed the ſame into their mouthes whiles they are ſleppynge. Ye remembre (I trow) what is written of Timotheus that fortunate captayne of the Atheniens, whoſe good happe and ſucceſſe in thinges gaue fyrſt place to this prouerbe. *Slepe he neuer ſo faſt, his nette catcheth for him.* (For ye ſhal vnderſtande, that of his continual proſperous fortune peinters toke occaſion to pourtray his image ſleping, and fortune in the meane whiles throwing into his nettes both cities and dominions.) And lykewyſe this other prouerbe, *The howlate flieth* (wherby was ment, that lyke as Pallas, to whome the howlate is conſecrate, was wonte to gene good and harpie ſucceſſe to many of the Atheniens purpoſes vnaduiſedly enterpriſed: So lykewiſe that armie, whiche had Timotheus ones for captayne, was euer victorious, though temme to one it ſhuld haue chaunced otherwyſe. But theſe prouerbes on the other ſide doo make agaynſt wyſemen. *He was borne vnder an vnluckie moone, or vppon a croſſe daie*, Or, *he hath Seians horſe* (whiche horſe as writers doo affyrme, had for his beautie diuers maiſters ſucceſſiuely, who all at laſt had euill end.) Or, *he hath gotten Toloſan golde* (the owners wherof ſpedde no better than the former) with many ſuche other prouerbes, whiche I holde it beſt to ouerpaſſe, leſt ye thought I had robbed my friende Eraſmus Adagies. To retourne therfore to my mattier, I ſate, that Fortune fauoureth men not of the moſt forcaſt, and loueth bolde hazardours, ſuche as refuſe no chaunce of the dyſe. But wyſedome maketh men the warer,

Who they be that fortune aduaunceth.

warer, and more fearefull to aduenture any thing, wherfore ye see daiely how these wisemen are euer pounded in beggery and necessitee, *and fedde with smoke*, leadyng foorth their tymes as vnregarded, vnesteemed, and vnaccepted. Whereas my fooles on the other syde doee flow in richesse and promocions, and for shorte doe flourysshe on all sydes. For surely, and if ye coumpte it no small parcell of felicitee to stande in good grace with great men, and liue familiarly amongst those my golden gods: now I see not what wisedome can auaile you, nay rather how it should not muche displeasure you, seeynge they for the most parte beyng vnlerned, doe reproue lernynge, as that they know not. Or yf Rychesse be to be sought for, I praie you what gaine can the merchant haue, whan as wysedome biddeth, his conscience at any tyme shoulde staggar at a false othe, or beynge taken with a plaine lie, he did blusshe therat, or set but a barly corne by all those grudgeyng doubtes, that wysemen put vpon theefte and vsurie. Moreouer, who so gapeth after *spirituall dignitees* and *promocions*, (as there be rauins enough that watche for suche carein) let hym thinke that an asse or a cowherde shall sooner be auanced to the same than any wyse, or learned man. Than in case thou effemest womens loue and daliaunce (whiche sure is one of the greatest partes of my plaie.) They good podes are wholy addicted to fooles and trifletalkers; yea none otherwyse doee abhorre and shonne a wyseman, than they would doee a Skorpion. Briefely, who so euer they be, that entende to lyue frankely in feast and gladnesse, for the fyrste pointe wyll see well that Master Sage be shutte out of the doores, and sooner

Fooles obtayne promocions before wisemen.

let in any maner beast than him. Finally, what euer syde ye tourne you to, be it to Prelates, to Princes, Iudges, Rulers, friendes, or enemies, all thing is gotten for money, whiche lyke as a wyseman despiseth, so I thinke it be, because he can not come by it, it standeth so farre from his reache, as *yf the foxe would eate no grapes.* Well, all be it there be no ende nor measure of my praises, yet it must behoue me at last to make an ende of my talke, I will leaue therefore. So that fyrste I may briefely touche vnto you, how I want not of many great Aurours, who with their writinges and deedes also haue blasonned and set me forthe, lest elles perchaunce ye might iudge, that foolisshely I stande in mine owne conceyte, or lawiers might vse cauillacions against me, saying, I alleged no bokes for my prouffe. Goe to therefore, let vs allege somewhat for oure selfe, and reherce vp as thei dooe thinges nothing seruing to the purpose. So fyrste I saye, that none wil denie this olde sawe to be true, *how wheras the thinge selfe wanteth, there it is best at lest to counterfaict the same,* wherupon younge children that goe to schole, haue for one of their first lessons this verse of Cato taught them, whiche saieth: *It is most wysedome for a man in place to countrefaicte Folie.* Nowe therfore I pray you consider with your selues, how great a weale and benefite must Folie in deede be, wheras the countrefaictyng and shadowe onely of the same, deserueth so muche prayse at learned men. Among whome mine owne good Horace, as a fatte and faire fedde hoglynge of Epicures herde, *aduiseth men to myngle Folie with their graue counsailes,* (all be it the addicion he maketh of *short folie*, was not all of

Moneys force.

Folie proueth hir prayses by auctoritees out of bokes.

the

the cunnyngest.) Also in an other place he sayeth, *it is a swete thing to be a foole whan place requireth*: And than againe he confesseth, *he had rather be holden for a foole and an Ideote, than beyng wise to be barked at, and hitten of euerie bodie*. And Homer likewise, whereas in all condicions he praiseth and commendeth Telemachus, yet in diuers places he is wonte to call hym *chyldishe and imprudent*, whiche name these writers of Tragedies dooe gladlye for a token of good lucke geue to boyes, and stripelings. But for Gods sake, what is els conteygned in Homers whole Poesie of the sacred boke called Ilias, saue onely *the contencious debates of foolishe kynges, and foolishe people*: wherby it appeareth, *that all the world is full of fooles*, as Cicero sayed rightly, in which so fewe wordes he gaue me as absolute and ample a praise, as might be. For who is he that knoweth not the valewe and goodnesse of a thing to be the more acceptable, the largelier and more copiously that the same is spread into all partes? But it may be (ye wyll saye) that Christen men geue no credence to these painem autours: in whiche case (if ye thinke so good) I am content to *proppe vp, and founde* (as doctours saye) my prayses vpon such textes as for wytnesse of the same I shall fetche oute of holy scripture. Fyrste of all prasyng diuines of theyr lawfull fauour, that they wil licence me so to dooe.

The world full of fooles.

Auctoritees out of scripture for folie.

Next than because I take a great charge in hand, and it were no good maner to call the Muses eftesoones from their fountaine of Helicon, to come backe so greate a iourney as is from thence hither, namely for a mattier smally pertainynge to theyr facultee, peraduenture it were better wysshed of me, whyles I plaie the Doctresse

of diuinitee, and passe through these brambles, that the soule of Duns woulde a litle leue Sorbone College, and enter into my brest, be he neuer so thornie, and fuller of pricles than is any vrcheon, to departe agayne whan I haue dooen ones, and yf he liste *to the gasowes*. That would god I mighte proprely take a newe countenance, and were cladde in a doctourlike apparayle: sauyng I feare lest some of you woulde laye thefte to my charge, as though I had priuely piked our *Maister doctors* cunning out of their studi deskes, because I can so much Diuinitee withoute booke. But haue ye no meruaile though my continuall and daily conuersacion amonges doctours, maketh me to beare awaye some one woorde or other: seynge the *figtre image of Priapus coulde in processe* of tyme, as his maister redde Homer, marke and remembre some Greke vocables: And likewyse Lucyans cocke throughe longe continuaunce and conuersyng among men, did learne so perfectly theyr speche. But now (on gods name) to oure mattier: Salomon the Ecclesiaste writeth in his firste chapiter, *that the noumbre of fooles is infinite*. Nowe where he speaketh of an infinite noumbre, is it not as muche, as yf he comprehended all men therin, sauynge onely a certayne, so few, as I can not tell yf at any tyme they were seen at all? Muche more expressely dooeth Ieremie confesse the same: *for eche man* (sayeth he) *is made a foole in his owne wysedome*: So onely vnto God he loweth wysedome, and assigneth folie for peculier vnto all men. Than againe a little aboue that, he would *no man should glorie in his owne wysedome*: and why so mine owne good Ieremie? *For southe* (wyll he saye) *for that man hathe no*

wyse-

wisedome at all. But to retourne agayne to the Ecclesiaste. What ment he (trow ye) by his protestacion, when he lowdely cried oute so, *Vanitee of vanitees, and all is vanitee?* what? but (as afore I saied) that this humayne lyfe is naught but a certaine great playe of Folie? confirming (as who sayeth) that noble sentence of Cicero a little afore recited, *how all this world is full of fooles.* More ouer, where the other wyse Ecclesiasticus sayed, *A foole changeth like the moone, but a wiseman abydeth in one state as the sonne:* what signified he els hereby: but that mānkinde is altogethers foolysshe, and God onely deserueth the name of wysedome. For ye shall understand, that by the moone (according to the exposicion of doctours) is figured mankynde: and by the sonne, whiche is the head and fountaine of all light, is ment e god him selfe the father, and originall of all sapience. Whereunto this maketh greatly, that Christ hym selfe in the gospell, *denied any man ought to be called good, saiuing god him selfe.*

Now therefore if euery man that is not wyse, muste be holden for foolishe, and who so euer is good, is wyse also, (according as the Stoikes do affyrme) than per consequent ye muste nedes confesse, that mortall men are al togethers wrapped in the bandes of Folie. Furthermore, Saloman in his xvb. chapitre sayeth: *Folie maketh fooles gladde:* wherein he confesseth plainely, that no thing in this life can be sweete or pleasant, vnlesse that folie yelde the same vnto you: and hereunto maketh that sayeng also: *Who exhorteth you to wisedome, exhorteth you to sorow: and in much vnderstanding, is muche indignacion:* and doeth not this noble preacher plainly confyrme the same, saiyng in his. vii. chapitre: *That the herte of a*

wiseman is wheras sorow is, and the hert of a foole wheras glad nesse is. Therefore Salomon thought it not sufficient to consume time about the knowlage of wisedome, vnlesse he further should busie him selfe to knowe me also. That in case ye shally beleue myne, marke I pray you his owne wordes in the firste chapitre: *And I haue applied my hert (sayeth he) to knowe wysedome and learnynge, and likewise to know errours and folie:* wherin ye must note this well, how it maketh muthe for my dignitee, that he putteth folie in the latter place, namely seynge the Ecclesiaste, or churche preacher wrote it, and pardye ye knowe how the church ordre willeth, that who so is fyrste in dignitee, shall goe last in place, to the ende, that howe euer in other poinctes, yet herein at lest he dooe obserue the precepte of the gospell. But folie to be farre more noble and excellent than wisedome, I wene I can proue you by witnesse of the Ecclesiasticus, who so euer was autour of that booke in the. xliiii. chapiter of the same: whose text surely I holde it not best to recite vnto you, before ye somewhat shall haue ayded the induction of myne argumente, with answearynge handsomely vnto me, lyke as Plato introduceth those that dispute wyth Socrates to dooe. So fyrste I demaunde of you, what thinge to your iudgement ought sooneste to be kept close and hydden, other those that are precious and rare to be gotten, or other that are vile & dogthepe in euery place? dooe you holde your peace? Nowe surely how euer ye would dissemble, yet shall this olde greke prouerbe answeare for you: *the waterpotte is sette behinde euerye dore:* the auctorites of whiche prouerbe let none of you be so vngodly to refelle, seeyng Aristotle hym selfe, the God

of our

of our maister doctours doeth in many places recite it: and in sadnesse I can not thinke, that anye of you all is so madde, to leue golde or precious stones in the hieghe waye: naye rather ye laye theim vp in your most secrete closett, and yet, that not sufficynge, ye double locke them in the strongest coffers ye haue, whereas durt ye leue lynge styll on the dunghill. Ergo, if that be hidden, that is more precious, and the other vile thinge are lefte abrode as vntended to, is it not manifest now, that wisedome whiche he forbiddeth to be hidden, is farre more vile than folie, whiche muste accordynge to his rede be locked vp and kept as close as may be? And now I am content to reherce you his owne woordes, (whiche are) *Better is the man that hideth his folie, than he who hideth his wisedome.* But what saye you to this that scripture attributeth to fooles a certayne benignitee, and gentyl whitenesse of nature, condemning wysemen for proude and despitfours of all others saue theim selues? For so dooe I plainely take the meanyng of the Ecclesiaste in the.x. chapiter. *But a foole (saieth he) that walketh in the strete, being him selfe vnwise, supposeth all men to be fooles as he.* Now is it not (I praye you) a sygne of an exceding gentilnesse in him to make euery bodye his mathe and felow: that whereas none so base wil not meane ly stande yet in selfe reputacion, his curtesie is suche to dele euery man a fleese of hys prayse. Therfore Salomon beyng so great a kynge, was naughte ashamed of my name whan he saied in his.xxi. chapitre, *I am moste foole of all men*: For *Paule doctour of the gentiles* thoughte scorne therof, when writting to the Corinthians he saide: *I speake it as vnwise, that I more than other*, &c, as who

sayeth

saieth it were a great dishonour for him to be ouercome in folie. But here (loe) me thinke I heare howe I am hissed at by some of these greke professours, who study scripture in that tounge and make as though other doctours at these dates saw nothing, nomore than crowes doue whan their eies ar pekt out, whiles with certaine Annotacions of their owne, they goe aboute to dulle mens eies as with smoke, amonge which sorte of notemakers, my friend Erasmus, whom often for honours sake and good will I doe mention, maie be counted the seconde, if not the fyrste. They (like enoughe) will reproue me, and (ô) *what a foolisshe allegacion is this* (will they saye:) *and how mete a witnesse for dame* Folie *to bringe in, whereas the apostles meaning is fare otherwyse, than she dreameth it to be: for in these woordes he wold not be taken for more foole than other, but whan he had saied,* They are ministers of Christ, *and so am* I *also, to the ende yet he shuld not be holden for a vainglorious vaunter in that he made him self coequal with the other, he added as by correction,* I more than other, *signifiinge therby, how not oneli he was matche to the other apostles, but some what also their superiour: whiche although he woulde should be taken for verie trueth, yet lest the arrogant auowinge therof might partli haue offended mens eares, he did first shelde the same with the pretexte of* Folie (saiyng) I speake it as the vnwiser, *because he wist what priuilege fooles haue to speake trueth without offence.* Well, what euer Paule mente whan he wrote thus, I leaue hardly to them to dispute on: because I willyngher dooe folow the auctorytee of other grosse and fatte doctours, who amonges vulgar folke, are in greatest reputacion, so farforth as a great part of learned men also had leuer (by God) for more sure-

surelie be deceiued with theim, than iudge vpon righter knowlage with these studiers of the scripture in the thre toungs? For no man setteth more by these smatterers in the Greke tounge, than they wold do by as manie chattering iaes: chiefely seing that a certayne glorious doctour, whose name I doo suppresse for the nones, lest els these iayes would chatter this greke taūt agaynst him, *An asse to the harpe*, doth in expoūding both magistrally and theologically this selfe same text frō this poincte forwarde, *I more than others*, make it to be the heade of a new sentence, puttinge also a new clefte and diuision in the same, whiche sure he coulde neuer haue dooen, without a wonderous conueighance of Logike. But for more playnesse I wil repete vnto you his owne woordes, not onely in forme, but also in matter, (as scholemen saye): And this was his expolicion. *I speake it as the more vnwise, that is to say (quod he) in case I seeme vnwise vnto you because I do coequall my selfe vnto the false apostles, than more vnwise will you coūpt me, in auaūcinge my selfe afore them.* Neuertheless thys goodlie expositour not muche bynethe that, as if he had forgotten him selfe, falleth quite into an other sense. But wherabout goe I now? Shall I stande to one onely exemple in my defence, seyng all doctours take it commenly for theyr priuilege, to strecche out heauen (that is to say) holy writte lyke a cheuerell skinne? Seing also howe in Paules epistles, the woordes of scripture fare as if they were of contrary senses, wheras being set in their right places, thei do varie neuer a dele, if we geue credite to Hierome. For whan Paule saw at Athenes an Altare dedicate to the Godds, the entitlyng wherof he

Nicolaus de Lyra.

Holy writ likened to a cheuerell skinne.

thought good to bringe in for a prouffe and corroboracion of the Christē beleue, leauing al the reſt that made agaynſt his purpoſe, he toke onely the two latter woordes of the ſame, (which were theſe) *to the vnknowen god* yet in ſome parte he was content to chaunge theim to: for the whole ſuperſcripcion was ſet vp in this maner. *To the gods of Aſia, europa, and Africa, to the vnknowne, and ſtraunge Gods.* So vpon this exemple of Paule I wene it procedeth, that cōmenly at theſe daies *my faire broode of doctours* do enterpriſe to nippe of here and there foure or fiue woordes of the whole, yea and thoſe ſome thing altered and corrupted (if it ſtande theim vpon) to applie the ſame ſo botched together to their owne ſēſe and commoditie, how euer that that goeth before, and that that foloweth: doeth nothinge ſerue to purpoſe, or rather make cleane agaynſt them. Which their ſayd iugglyng they conueigh yet by ſo happie an vnſhamefaſtneſſe, as in this poinct Ciuilians haue cauſe oftentymes to enuie *doctours of diuinitee*, whan now in Allegacions nothing makinge for the mattier, they bee ſo farre paſſed by theym. For I pray you (of friendſhip) tell me, what thing may be to harde for theſe doctours to bringe about? ſeyng how that great aforeſayd doctour (I had almoſte blabbed foorth his name agayne, but I feare me I tell you of the greke adage) coulde drawe out of Lukes woordes, the conſtruction of a ſentence nomore agreable vnto Chriſtes meaning therin, than fyre is with water? For Chriſte whan the immynent daunger of his death aproched, what tyme, or neuer, it becometh good ſeruaūt? moſt conſtantly to take theyr maiſters part, and defende him to theyr powers,

as

as confederates in league doo one for an other, to the ende yet he might driue all confidence in suche maner defence out of his Apostles hertes, ared of theim, *whether they wanted ought, what time he sent them foorth so barely without anie maner prouision, not geuing them so muche as shoes to saue their fete from thornes and stones, nor yet a wallet to put their meate in? wherunto whan they had answerd, that thei lacked nothing: But now (quod he) who so of you hath a wallet, let him sell it, and his bagge also, yea and who so hath not, make he sale at lest of his cote, to bie him a swoorde.* Now wheras it is manifest enough, that all Christs doctrine pretendeth naught but meknesse, patience, and contempte of this mortall lyfe, whiche of you perceyueth not, what he ment in this place? For I take it playnely that he sayd thus, to geue his Ambassadours the Apostles, the better courage, to the ende that they not onely should set no store by shoes, nor by vitayling bagges, but should cast away theyr cotes also, the nemblier and more deliuerly to goe about theyr charge and commission of the gospell preachynge, prouiding theym selues of naught els but onely a swoorde, not that swoorde that theues and murderers doo occupie, but the swoorde of the spirite, being whetted all on Charitie, whose poynct perseth into the inwarde partes of mans hert, & cutteth all fleshely affections thence, so clene, as naught remaineth sauing pietie, and ardent loue towardes god. But marke ye now (of felowship) how warilye thys famous doctour wresteth the playne & clere sence hereof. For by the swoorde (sayeth he) is ment defence against persecution: and by the wallet is vnderstode competent prouision we should make of thinges necessarie to liue withall. As

who saieth, Christes mynde were chaunged, because him semed that he sent foorth his Ambassadours not halfe royally furnisshed, and therefore did recant here, and call backe his fyrst Instructions geuin theim. Or as if he had here forgotten those woordes, whiche afore he spake vnto theim with suche a vehemencie, *ye shal be blissed whan ye be persecuted withall kynde of oultrage and turment, but make ye no resistence against those euilles ye shall suffer: for blissed be the meke in sprite, not those that are fierce, and stubbourne herted.* Or as if it were quite out of his remembraunce, that in other places he likeneth them *to be sparowes, and lilies*, as touching the smal care that thei shuld take for theyr liuinge. Now, so muche lacked that he woulde haue theim goo weponlesse, as rather they should sel theyr cotes from their backes to bie the same & sooner go naked, than without a sworde by their syde Moreouer lyke as vnder the name of swoorde (as he expoundeth it) *all maner of defence is conteigned, that mai repell iniuri, and violence, so vnder the name of bagge, is comprised what euer prouision is made to liue withall.* And thus (loe) this depe expositour of Gods wyll and meanynge setteth foorth the apostles complete armed, with ieuelins, bowes and arowes, slinges, and haulfe hakes, to preache the gospell, and Christes crosse. Ladinge them moreouer with great males, and paniers well stuffed with vitayles, lest els perchaunce they might sometime departe from theyr innes vndyned. No not so muche as this, myght any thyng moue this gaie learned man, that Christ hym selfe shortly after rebukyng Peter *bid deth the swoorde should be put vp againe*, whiche afore he commaunded so ernestli to be bought: and that it neuer

was

was heard how the apostles did at ante tyme occupie sworde and buckler, to resist theyr aduersaries violence whiche nathelesse they would not haue sticked to doo in case that Christes meaning in these aforesayd woordes had been such, as he expoundeth it to bee.

There is an other doctour likewyse of no lesse reputation thā this former, but for honours sake I name him not, who interpreting a place of Abacuc the prophete, where he sayeth, *The skinnes of the lande of Madian shal be disparcled and torne asunder.* nothyng considering that the Prophete spake of the *Madianistes* lodgeinges or tentes *for the fielde*, which were made of beastes skinnes, as auncientlye men in warrefare vsed, writeth plainly, that Abacuc did prophecy there of the fleaing of Sainct Bartholmeus skynne. I my selfe not longe agoen was present (as many times I am wont to be) at a certaine disputation, where diuers doctours were assembled. There whan one of them by chaūce had put forth a question, *by what auctoritie of scripture heretikes ought sooner to be comptrolled by the fire, thā confuted by argumentes* An other auncient father, that satte by hym, beynge so crabbed faced, as onelye the complexion of his hanging browes might tel you straight he was maister doctour aunswerde in a great choler, that Paule him selfe was the first ordeigner of that lawe, whereas in one of hys epistles it is redde, Hæreticum hominem post vnam et alteram correptionem deuita. (But I are peroone at your delicate eares, because I cā not otherwise thā in the latine phrase expresse it vnto you) I exhorte you (sayeth Paule) to deuite or shonne the company of heretikes, after you shall haue ones or twise reproued theim for their erro-

 nious opi-

nius opinions. Now whan this doctour had thundred fooyth this texte in a bigge voyce, makinge often repetition of this latine woorde (deuita) so that many merualed now what the diuell he ailed, at last he concluded that heretikes must be lifted de, vita, makinge two woordes therof, as who sayeth lifted out of lyfe. Many laughed at this his fine exposicion, and some there were yet, who toke the same for a very Theologal inuencion. But whereas others (that notwithstandyng) beganne to replie, by and by rose vp an other much solemne and irrefragable doctour to take his part. And thus lieth the case (quod he) *It is written, Suffer thou no misdoer to liue, now sins that euery heretike misdooeth, ergo thou must suffer no heretike on liue.* This Syllogysme beinge thus trussed vp by him, (loorde) how all the assistence beganne to wonder at his wittinesse, thoroughly confirming his sentence, yea and that the sooner, seyng none of theym had the witte or learninge to consyder, how that law was fyrst ordeyned agaynst *lottemongers, enchaunters* and *sorcerers*, suche as the Hebrews in theyr tounge name vvitches. For els why should not fornicatours, and drunkardes by as good reason, be punished with the lyke peyne of death? But I play the very foole in goynge aboute to tell vnto you, all suche balde deuises of these furde hoodedmen, being in deede so innumerable, as would not (on my conscience) be comprehended in all the large volumes of Crisyppus, and Didymus, taking hardly Fyt zharbert zs *abregementes* for aduauntage. Only my meaning was, to aduertise you that seing these diuine maister doctours durst take vpō theim to wrest and mistake scripture in such sort, than

muche

muche more I muſt be borne with, being but a younge doctreſſe, and lyke a woman ſhotyng foorthe my bolte at the gaineſt, if ſometime may chaunce I laye not all my allegacions fully by leuell. But now at laſt I lepe backe agayne to ſaynct Paule, and Gladly (ſayeth he) *ye doo beare with vnwiſe men*, (ſpeaking it by him ſelfe) alſo in an other place, *receiue you me, as vnwiſe that I am*: and further, *I ſpake not this preciſely as vpon gods precept, but rather in mine owne vnwiſedome*. Than agayne, *we* (ſayeth he) *are become fooles for Chriſtes ſake*: Doo you here now how great prayſes of Folye this ſo greate an autour alleageth, yea and that more is, he playnely enioygneth Folie vnto vs, for a thing moſt neceſſary, and right, importyng to ſaluacion? For *whoſo ſemeth* (ſayeth he) *to be wiſe amonges you, let him become a foole, to the ende he be wiſe in deede*. Now ſay you my maiſters, woulde ye any more euident prouffes than this, or an other exemple alſo in Lukes goſpell, where Ieſus calleth the twoo diſciples fooles, with whom he ioigned company by the waye? This in eſpeciall maye be taken for a meruayle, how Paule ſo great a diuine ſpareth not to attribute a maner fooliſhneſſe, yea vnto god alſo: where he ſayeth, *what euer of god is fooliſſhe, is wyſer yet than any thing in men*: in expoundinge of whiche texte Origene denieth it to be poſſible, that this folye may be referred to the general opinion of men vpon the ſame. As appeareth by this other text of Paule, *to reaſon of the miſteries of the croſſe, is ſurely to ſuche as beleue it not and doo periſſhe in their peruerſneſſe, naught els but Folie*. But aye, what atteth me to feke ſo many textes of Scripture for witneſſes of my woordes, ſeinge Chriſte him ſelfe in

These argumentes muſt be taken as ſpoken by Folie, not that Erasmus ment ſo in deede.

the

the psalmer dooeth playnly speake thus vnto the father, *Thou knowest myne vnwisdome?* So, not without some cause and respecte we see in scripture, how fooles and simple soules stande highly in Godds fauour, whiche I take to be, that lyke as great princes haue wysemen in seruice and suspicion, as Iulius Cæsar had Brutus and also Cassius, whereas he nothinge helde hym selfe adradde of dronken Marke Anthony, and as Nero mistrusted Seneca. and Dionysius stode in doubte of Plato, whereas freely on the other syde they gaue themselues to the pleasant companie of men, of a grosser & more simple capacitie: So in like rate dooeth Christe blame & reproue these worldly sages, who fully cleue and stande to their owne wysedome. This by Paules woords is confyrmed, where he sayeth, *God hath chosen him out those that the worlde reputed for fooles.* And in an other place: *God hath disposed to saue the woorld by foolishnesse, seyng that by wisdome it might not be conserued.* Yea God himselfe dooeth sufficientli confesse the same, wher as he crieth by the mouthe of the prophete, *I shall confounde the wisedome of wisemen, and reproue the prudence of sages:* So Christ in an other place rendeth thankes vnto the father, *that he had hidden the misterie of saluacion frō wisemen, and disclosed the same to youngelinges,* (That is to saie) *to fooles,* (for so the Greke woorde signifieth.) And hereto serue the manyfolde nippes and tauntes, wherwith Christ in diuers places of the gospel, baiteth Pharisees, and Scribes, and Doctours of the lavv, takyng ernestly yet the part of simple and vnlearned folkes. For is it not as muche to say, *Woo bee vnto you, ye Scribes and Pharisees,* as wo be vnto you, ye wisemen?

By Folie in these places is ment godly simplicite and by wisdom a worldely politianes

But

But where finde you that euer he charged either ponglynges, or women, or fisshers, with that so beaute a woorde? For it semeth properly that he delited muche in their simplicitee, euen lyke as those kinde of dumme beastes were moste acceptable vnto him, that were fardest remoued from all forlike wylinesse. And therfore those he rathest to ryde on an asse, all be it (so plea synge hym) he might as safely haue bestridden a Lyons backe. We reade also that the holie ghoste descended in the lykenesse of a Culuer, and not of an Egle, or a Buttocke. And besydes this, scripture in many places maketh mencion of hertes, of fawnes, of lambes, and suche sely beastes. Lyke as Christe dooeth call his elect and chosen by the name of Shepe, whiche beaste is of all others the vnwisest (witnesse this prouerbe of Aristotle) *his maners sauour of the shepe, or he hath shepysshe condicions*: whiche quippe in wise of reproche is vsed against blockeheades of the verie shalowest capacitee. And yet we see, how Christ professeth him selfe to be the herdeman of such a flocke: Yea and that the more is, delited him selfe in the name of Lambe, that Iohn the Baptist gaue him, whan he pointed him thus to the people: *Loe here the lambe of god*: whiche resemblaunce is lykewyse vsed in many places of the Apocalipse. Now all these textes that I haue alleaged, doe they not plainly testifie, *that mortall men beyng fooles, are godly also?* and that christ him selfe mindynge the relese and redempcion of mankyndes folie, although he was the ineffable wisedome of the father became yet a maner foole. wher as takyng mans nature vpon hym, he was founde both in fourme and habite lyke vnto other men. Euen as

Paule saieth, *he was made sinne also, to cure and heale the sinnes of the worlde*, to whiche sinnes yet it pleased hym to minister none other medecines, than the Folie of the crosse, by the handes of the Apostles, being grosse and unskilled men: whom natheles he as diligently did perswade unto foolishenesse, as otherwyse he retired and dishorted them from wysedome, in allurynge theim by exemples shewed upon *Children, upon burdes of the ayre, and other thinges smallie sensed or no whitte*, as whiche liue by no arte nor forsight, and likewyse in warning theim *to take no care how they should use their wordes, when they were brought afore iudges and presidentes*, and further in *forbidding them to seke out the accompt of times, or the smallest momentes of times*. To the ende (as who saieth) they shuld not leane to their owne prudence, but with whole thought and mynde depende on him remittinge all unto his discretion. Wherunto this also maye be applied, that god the Creatour and fyrst former of all thynges forbadde Adam under penaltie of death he should not taste of the fruite of the tree of Science or knowlage.

The tasting of the fruite of the tree of knowlage brought in death.

As who saieth *Science were the more poyson to felicitie*: Accordinge wherto, Paule also dooeth openly *reproue science for a thing most hurtesome and pernicious, seing it puffeth up the minde of man with selfe glorie*: Lyke as sayncte Bernard also folowing (as I take it) Paules sayed opinion, *expounded the hille, wheron Lucifer established his seate, to be the hill of Science*. And perchaunce it shoulde not be the feblest argument, to saie what fooles find so muche grace and fauour afore god, as to Folie onely is geuin perdone and forgeuenesse of trespasses, wheras to wysedome not so muche as the least iote is remitted.

In

In sorte that who so euer dooe are at god forgeuenesse of their sinnes, although they wittingly did committe the same, yet wil they vse a certayne colour and pretext of Folie for theyr excuse: For so dooeth Aaron in the boke of Numbres (if I well remembre me) *desire perdone of the punishment that his wiues faultes deserued*, Saieynge, *I pray the (O lorde) not to laie to our charge this sinne, whiche we haue foolisshely committed.* And so dooeth Saul pray Dauid to forgeue him, *For it apereth* (sayde he) *that I haae doone foolishly.* Than agayne the selfe Dauyd speaketh fayre and humbly to the lord, in this wyse, *But I praie the (o lord) to perdone the inipuitee of thy seruaunt, seeyng we haue doone folisshly.* As if he thought he should opteyne no mercie, vnlesse he had laied Foly and inconsidraunce to bote. But what speake we of Dauid (knowyng how Christ the sonne of god hangynge on the crosse did in this wise make intercession for his enemies, *Father forgeue them, and laide* none other excuse, than, *for they know not what they dooe.* So Paule in like maner writing to Tymothe said, *But herefore haue I obteined the mercie of god, in as muche as ignorantly I offended in mine incredulitee.* Now what is it to saie, *I offended ignorantly*, but that, I did it through Foly and not thorough malyce? or what other exposicion can ye make, of *herefore haue I obteyned mercy*, than that els I shoulde not haue obteyned it, not hauyng layde the wyte on Folie? And no lesse maketh for vs, that saiynge of Danid in the *Psaltier, Lorde, take not to herte the trespasses of my youth, and mine ignorancies remembre not.* Doe you marke now what two colours he bringeth in for his purgacion that is to saie Youthe, whiche age I dooe euer accom-

 pany,

pany, and ignorancies speaking it in the Plural numbre, to expresse therby the greatter copie and habundance of his Folie. Finally, as it were an endlesse labour to tell you infinitie suche exemples, so to knit vp shortly, I say in my conceite, that Christian Religion seemeth to haue a certayne sibshyp with simplycitie, & deuoute foolishenesse, in nothing agreing with worldly wisedome. But if ye are me, as how: than doo no more but consider how children, old folkes, women, and fooles, are those amõges others that shew theim selues deuoutest, and most enclined to church seruice, and holy thyngs, reioysing to be present thereat, in sort that euer at Masse tyme ye shall see theim approche nerest vnto the altars, euin through a certayne instinction of naturall selinesse prouoking theim to god. Thynke also how the verie fyrst autours and founders of Christen Religion were as sharpe aduersaries of al Science, and men trustynge to their owne cunninge, as otherwyse frendly embrasours of simplicitie and plainesse. Lastlie perpende ye thus, how no maner fooles are in apparẽce more ideotelike, than suche are totallye rauished, and enflamed with the ardent zeale of Christen charitee. So lauishly they deale their goods abrode, forgette al iniuries done vnto them, suffre theim selues to be deceiued, put no difference betwene friends and foes, abhorre al pleasures and delites of the bodie, are fedde vp and made fatte with fasting, watchynge, teares, labours, and despises, despise their owne life, and desire death aboue life, briefly seme to be so astonned and past all commen sensis, whiche men liue by, as if their soules dwelled not in those bodies thei beare about with theim, but rather in some other mansion place. Whiche straunge trade of theirs I

These wordes must not be wrested to any euill sense otherwise than the autour ment.

know

knowe not howe to call, but well maye it to the commen iudgement of men, appeere to be a very madnesse, or rauynge of the wittes. Meruaile ye the lesse therfore, that the apostles were iudged by the wycked Ethnikes to be drunkardes, as if their heddes were ouercharged with new wine. And that Paule likewise was holden for madde, of Festus the presidēt of Iurie, in these wordes, Thou rauest Paule and muche learning of bokes hath turned the into a madnesse. But seynge I haue ones taken vpon me to plaie the doctresse, putting on a Lyons hide (as they saye) let me not sticke now to goe throughe withall, and to teache you this also, that the selfe same felicitie, whyche Christians doo so hotely desyre, and by so many labours doo seke for, is naught els than a certayne kynde of rauyng, in the spirite, and godly foolishenesse. Whyche wordes I would not ye should grate on, nor take theim at the woorst, but rather note the thing in deede as it lieth. For syrst ye must thinke, how Christians in thys poinct doo fullye agree with the opinion of Platos Sectatours, how the soule of man being drawned and entangled in the fleshely bondes of the bodie, cannot as being dusked with the grosenesse of the same, beholde and take fruicion of the sight of verie thinges as they are in deede. Wherupon Plato defineth Philosophie to be a meditacion or remembraunce of death, in as muche as it plucketh and retyreth the minde of man from visible and corporall things, to those that are inuisible and ghostly. Whiche effect is in death also. Therfore so longe as the soule within man doeth rightly and in due wise peruse the Organs of the bodie, so longe is that man called sounde, and of good discretion: but whan some of those bandes or conduites

Take thes wordes to be spoken vnder the person of Folie.

Foly speaketh.

 beinge

beynge ones perished, she dooeth busily labour to recouer hir freedome, minding a certaine flight (as it were) and breakyng lose from that hir fleshely prison the bodie, by whiche struglyng the whole frame of the sensis, and inwarde powers is disioigned, you dooe holde him for madde and out of their right minds, whiche passion if it come perhaps through infirmitee, or faultinesse of any of those Organs, than dooe all men precisely agree, that it is plaine Madnes: How be it we see that euen this kynde of rauers dooe sometyme also prophecie of thyngs commyng, and sodeinly become knowers of tounges, and artes, whiche erste they neuer learned, shewyng to haue in them I wote neuer what especte of newe *inspiracion and diuinitee*: whiche vndoubtedly chaunceth, because the soule beyng somewhat enlarged, and made freer from the bodies yoke and contagiousines beginneth a little to exercise and welde hir selfe accordynge to the propertee of hir owne nature. And vpon lyke occasiō many folke labouring in the extreme pangs of death, are muche subiect (as I take it) to somewhat like hereto, as often as if they were rauished in a traūce they dooe speake of certaine wonderous thyngs perteignyng to an other worlde. But and if the saide wanderynge of the witt dooe befalle a man for that he is right passyngly moued and stirred vp with the loue of heauenly thyngs. I doubt now whether it maie bee called the selfe same kynde of madnesse, yet sure it is so nere syb therto, as many men now a daies wil doubt neuer a whitte to repute that his feruent affection towards god, for a verie dotage of the minde. Namely seyng a smalle numbre of suche sely good soules as are

Diuinitie in rauers.

deigned

deteigned therwith, doo in all theyr deedes, and liuyng repine, and disagree from the whole bande of other mortall men. Wherfore (I suppose) they are serued, as Plato feigneth, *that one of those prisoners was, that satte bounden in a darke denne vnder ground (as before I receited vnto you) whereas naught was seen els, sauinge shadowes and representacions of thinges. That where by chaunce the saide prisoner escaped out of the denne, and so commynge abrode into this worlde, saw verie thinges as they were in deede, returning of good will to his felowes, to aduertise theim of the enom they were in, he was no whitte beleeued of theim, but rather laught to scorne: For whereas he like a man of wisedome and experience seemed to pitie their madnesse and great blindnesse in mistakinge so of thinges, they on the other side did potte at him, and thrust him out of their companie, for a frantike foole.* So fareth it by the vulgar sorte of men, who cõmenly haue those thinges in greatest price and admiration, that are most sensuall and bodily, as whiche they take to be onelie, and none other: whereas godly folkes on the other part, what euer draweth nerest to the bodily vse, do the sooner therfore despise and set light by it, forsomuche as they are holy rauished and geuin to the contemplation of inuisible thinges. For as worldlyngs haue rytheste in best reputatiõ, next therto esteemyng the weale of theyr bodies, and lest regardinge the profite of theyr soules, in case they regarde it all, for some of theym beleue there is soule, because they can not see it at the eie: So agayne deuout persons put theyr whole confidence in god, being the simplest and most pure thyng of all others, and secondly do thearifie that, that draweth nerest to hym, I meane the spirite, bestowing no cost nor

The difference betwene worldly & godly men

tendance

tendaunce on their bodies, nor on pleasures belonging to the same. But money of all thyngs they neglecte, and set no store by, no more than ye wouldde doe by thynges superfluous, or rather noysome. That and if (male thaunce) at any time thei be enforsed to go about worldly afayres, I can tell you yet, that they doe it euilwillyngly, and with a spited stomake. So that (Paule saieth) *thei haue goodes, as not hauing goodes: and possesse theim, as not possessyng theim*, by reason they vary so much from the vniuersall and vulgar sorte of men. For although the Senses haue all a certaine parentage and kynneshyp with the body, yet be there of the same, some grosser in substaunce, as are *fealing, hearing, seynge, smelling, and tastyng*: some agayne more severed and removed from the body, as is *memorie, vnderstanding, and free-will*. Now seinge that the soule of man hath therein most strength and vigour, wherunto she most applieth hir selfe, therfore it cometh to passe, that holy men, the sorte of whose spirites is wholy bent vpon thinges contemplatiue, whiche are most distaunt and aliened from the grosser senses, doo fare in the rest, as yf they were benummed, or brute of iudgemēt as domme beastes are, whereas contrary the soules of vulgar people are most rife and pregnaunt in those grosse rude senses of the bodie, being as blunt and dulle yet, in the other fiue powers of the witte. And herevpon (I thynke) it cometh, that some deuoute persones (as it is written of theym) did without apperceiuing the difference, drinke lampe oyle in steede of wine. So lykewyse as conternyng the affections of the mynde, some of them be of faster league and allaunce to the body, as are *fleshlie lust, appetite to*

Saincte Barnarde drāke oyle in stede of wyne.

fode or

fode or slepe, ire, pride, and enuie, with suche other disordinate motions, wherwith holy men are euer at vnpeasible warre, but the vulgars not onely doo not eschew, but rather embrace theim, as suppolynge they can not liue without theym. Than againe, some other affections are entredeux and indifferent to bothe partes, whi che we maie name *Natural, as the reuerence a man beareth towardes fatherand mother, the charnesse he hath euer his children, the loue he oweth to his kinsfolkes and friendes*, wyth suche lyke. wbiche sayd Middle affections are had also in some degree and price amonges commen people, though not so muche as the other. But holy men wyll struggle to race them also out of theyr hert, sauyng as farforth as they be ghostly, and make rather towardes the hieghest part of man, which is the Sprite, than any other flesshely appetites: by wbych conueighance they maie loue theyr parent not as theyr parent, (for what els begat they sauyng theyr bodies? yet euin that also ought to be referred to god the maker of all thynges) but loue theim rather as good folkes, in whome the image of the sprite of god resplendisheth. wbyche saied resemblance they call verie felicitie, as the great test good that may be had, yea suche (they saye) as onely, and none other, shulde be beloued, required, and wished after. And so by this sayd rule, doo they measure lykewyse all the other partes and duities of this lyfe: wherby it cometh to passe, that what euer thing is seen here presently at the eie, if so be they doo not fully contemne the same, yet sure they sette muche lesse therby, than by other thinges, whiche maie not outwardely be seen. Yea they say also, that euin in the churche sacra-

Diuersitie of affections.

mentes, and woꝛkes of charitie there may be tried out bothe a ghoſtlineſſe and a bodilineſſe: As foꝛ example, In faſting they holde it not ſufficient for a man to abſteine from eating of fleſſhe, which vulgar folke ſuppoſe to be the entiere and perfect faſte, vnleſſe that he rebate ſomewhat alſo from his affections, in geuyng leſſe raines than before to his anger, or in cutting his prides combeſhorter, or in lightning him ſelfe of his bodily peize, to the ende his ſprite mai the nimblier climbe vp to the gripe and fruicion of heaueuly thinges. Likewiſe in howſell, and receiuing of the ſacrament, albeit) ſay they) the ceremonies and circumſtaunces vſed about the ſame, ought not to be neglected, yet muſt we take them of them ſelfe alone to be little auailable, oꝛ rather hurtfull, vnleſſe the other part, which is ſpirituall, be added alſo therunto: that is to ſay, the thing it ſelfe, whiche by thoſe outwarde ſignes is repreſented. Foꝛ repreſented is the death of Chriſt therby, whiche death al Chriſten mē are bounde to folow and expreſſe, bothe in daunting, fordoinge and burying of all bodily affections, to the end thei maie riſe againe, being reſtored to a new life, as vnited therby vnto chriſt and made all one amonges theim ſelues. Theſe miſteries are by goodly and ſpiritual meaners ſtāned in this foꝛt: but leude folke commenly do take the Maſſe ſacrifice to be of none other effect, than as it were a certaine church ſeruice, wherin they fully did their duities, allonge as they be preſent at it, ſtanding as nere the altare as thei maie, to here the woꝛdꝰ of the prieſt, oꝛ chauntinge of the quyre, with other like ceremonies and obſeruaūcꝰ vſed about the ſame. Now, not only in theſe two pointes, whiche foꝛ exemples ſake I haue ſet tofoꝛe you, but generally throughout all their liuing, holy men will flie from thoſe thingꝰ, that fauour of the bodye, as be-

ing rapte and drawen vp to the other, that are ghostlie and inuisible. In so muche therfore as there is suche diuersitie and discencion in al poyntes betwene these two trades of men, it cometh to passe, that eche of them doo take other for madde and distraught, notwithstanding (in my conceipte) that name male rightlier be applied vnto holy men, than vulgar people: whiche ye shall playnelier perceiue why, as soone I haue briefly (according to my promise) declared vnto you, *how the finall mede and gwerdone, that Christen men doo loke after, is naught els than a certaine sweete rauing, and simple alienacion of the minde*: wherin eftesones I requyre you, not to be ouer scrupulous graters at the bare word without taking the sense withall. Fyrst therfore ye must thinke, that Plato dodde euin than dreame of suche a thynge, whan he wrote, *that the passion and extreme rage of feruent louers was to be desired and embraced, as a thinge above al others most blissfull*: because that a vehement louer liueth not now in hym selfe, but rather in that that he loueth, so that the further & further a louers hert is distraught from him selfe, to dwell with the beloued, the more and more he reioyseth. And whan the minde seketh to wander frō the bodie, nor occupieth the powers of the same in the due vse, who will call this otherwise than playne madnesse? For els why doo you vse commenlye thys phrase of speche: *he is out of him selfe, and retourne men to thy selfe, and he is come againe to him selfe.* It foloweth therfore, how muche more perfect, and the depelier suche loue is impressed, that so muche the greatter, and the blisfuller is the rage also. Whiche so beynge that soule yet pinned within these bodily folde may smacke

Marke how Folie dalieth in hir wordes whiche are to be construed to a good sense or els to be but as a talke of Folie.

a little of suche a felicitie, consider ye than what a lyfe the sayncte soules leade in heaurn: wherunto the myndes of goodly persons doo with suche feruencie alpyre: Seyng there the spirite as vanquissher, and farre more puissaunt, shall wholy drawe vp, and conuerte the bodie into hir owne nature: Which she may doo the easilier seynge euin in this lyfe here, she had clensed and purified the same through fastinges and other deuout meditacions, to be the meter and more apte to receiue suche a ghostly transformacion. And than agayne, the spirite selfe shalbe meruaylously rauissched and soked vp by the farre more stronge and attractiue power of the highest spirite of all, whiche is God. So that nowe those holy men shalbe altogether transformed and alterated, by none other meanes yet to so hiegh a degree in felicitie, sauinge onely because they as wholy being issued out of theim selues, shall enioy and be participant of that vnspeakeable heauenly sweetenesse, proceding from a pure and right perfecte pleasure, throughe the myght of god, the greatest good of all, that rauissheth and attyreth all things to it selfe. Now albeit thys sayd felicitie is than moste amply and absolutely enioyed, whan the soules at the resurrection day beinge restored to theyr owne bodies, shall ioyntly receiue immortalitie: yet in asmuche as the life of good Christias is naught els than a continuall meditacion or certayne shadow as it were of that life to come, it chanceth, that they yet liuing, haue for theyr comforte permission at sometimes to discerne a taste or sauour of that highest rewarde behight vnto theim: Which sayde smacke or sente, be it but a little droppe in respecte of that large

Transformacion of the bodie into the spirite.

The life of good Christians a meditacion of the life to come.

flowing

flowyng well of eternall felicitie, yet surely it surpasseth, and incomparablie exceedeth all other bodily pleasures yea although all the delices of all men were wholy ioyned and put in one. So muche (loe) are spirituall thynges to be preferred before fleshely thinges, and the inuisible before the other visible. For this vndoubtedly is euin the very gwerdone that the prophete promiseth, Saying, *was neuer mans eie sawe, nor eare hard, nor thought of hert yet compassed, what, and how great felicitie god hath prepared vnto suche as doo loue him.* And thys is Mary Magdalens portion, whyche by chaunge of lyfe shall not be plucked away, but rather be more perfitely confyrmed. Who so euer therefore haue suche grace (whiche sure is geuin to few) by theyr lyfe tyme to tast of this sayd felicitie. they are subiecte to a certayne passion muche lyke vnto madnesse or witrauyng whan rauisshed so in the spirite, or being in a traunce, they doo speake certayne thinges not hanging one with an other, nor after any earthly fation, but rather dooe put foorth a voyce they wote neuer what, much lesse to be vnderstode of others: and sodenlie without any apparent cause why, doo chaunge the state of theyr countenaunces. For now shall ye see theim of glad chere, now of as sad agayne, now they wepe, now they laughe now they sighe, for briefe, it is certayne that they are wholy digraught and rapt out of them selues. In sort that whā a little after they come agayne to their former wittes, they deny plainly thei wote where they became or whether thei were thā in their bodies, or out of their bodies, waking or sleping: remembringe also as little, either what they heard, saw, sayed, or did than, sauyng

Godly mē in a kynde of traunce.

as it were through a cloude, or by a dreame: but this that know certainely, that whiles their mindes so roued and wandred, they were most happie and blissful, so that they lament and wepe at their retourne vnto their former senses, as who saieth, nothinge were leefer vnto them than continually to raue and be deteigned with suche a spece of madnesse. And this is but a certaine smacke or thinne taste of their blisse to come, But once more forgetting my selfe, I passe my boundes. How be it if ought shall seeme vnto you to haue ben sayde of me more knappishely thã became me, or with more words than neded, thynke I pray you, that I was the speaker, being bothe Folie, and a woman. Yet for all that remembre the Greke prouerbe, that *oftentimes a foole maie speake to purpose* vnlesse perchãce ye thinke that this maketh no whitte for women. I perceiue ye loke for an Epilogue or knotte of my tale, but than sure ye are verie fooles, if ye wene that I yet remembre what I haue spoken, after suche a rablement of words powred foorthe. The olde prouerbe sayeth, *I hate a tale bearer from the foorde*: But I saye, *I hate him that remembreth what he hath sayd.* Fare ye well therefore, clappe your handes in token of gladnesse, liue carelesse, and drinke all out, ye the trustie seruantes & solemne ministers of Folie.

FINIS.

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